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The National Guard sponsors the No. 88 car driven by Dale Earnhardt Jr.

NASCAR

SPONSORSHIP BACKFIRE

The National Guard spends millions on NASCAR but gains virtually no recruits

By TOM VANDEN BROOK
USA Today

The National Guard spent \$26.5 million to sponsor NASCAR racing in 2012 to bolster its marketing and recruitment but failed to sign up a single new soldier to its ranks, according to data provided to USA Today.

Even though the Guard spent \$88 million as a NASCAR sponsor from 2011 to 2013, it is

unclear how many new recruits, if any, signed up because of it, according to documents. The Guard on Wednesday would not confirm the figures on prospects and recruits developed through its NASCAR sponsorship.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., who was expected to hold a hearing on the recruitment program Thursday, assailed the Guard for "wasting a bunch of money on a very

expensive sports sponsorship."

The Guard received 24,800 recruiting prospects from the program in 2012, documents show. In those cases, potential recruits indicated the NASCAR affiliation prompted them to seek more information about joining. Of that group, only 20 met the Guard's qualifications for entry into the service, and not one of them joined.

SEE NASCAR ON PAGE 9

House's defense bill retains pay raises, benefits

By TRAVIS TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The House pushed ahead Wednesday with a vote to preserve troop pay raises and benefits during the coming year despite dire budget warnings from military leadership that not making cuts will harm readiness.

The House Armed Service

Committee passed a 2015 military personnel budget that rejected the Department of Defense's proposals to cap troop pay raises at 1 percent and slash the costs of base supermarkets, housing allowances and health care.

Military brass has warned it needs the reforms to fund a force that's equipped and ready to fight. But in a marathon debate

and amendment session, House lawmakers worked up a draft version of the nation's defense budget that maintains the slate of benefits and wrings funding out of some ship, aircraft and construction programs.

Committee Chairman Buck McKeon, R-Calif., said the House strategy is to keep up military funding and investment as much as possible until Congress

can reverse the Budget Control Act of 2011, also known as sequestration, a measure that requires steep reductions in defense and other federal funding. "I think it's best for the nation that we hold on to as much as we can until we find ourselves in a better [fiscal] situation," McKeon said.

SEE BILL ON PAGE 4

QUOTE
OF THE DAY

"It's really exciting to have a big movie release. Everyone should be so lucky to have that experience."

—Actor Josh Hartnett, who is starring in the eight-part Showtime series, "Penny Dreadful," which starts next week

See story on Page 18

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ON STRIPES.COM

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2. Three Navy P-3 Orions crushed in Japanese hangar collapse claimed total losses
3. The poignant process of etching new names into the Vietnam Wall
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MILITARY

Sinseki orders audit of VA clinics

Stars and Stripes

Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki has ordered a "face-to-face audit" at all Department of Veterans Affairs clinics, CNN reported Thursday.

Earlier Thursday, the House Veterans Affairs Committee voted to subpoena Shinseki in the wake of accusations that his department is responsible for treatment delays at some of its hospitals that cost veterans their lives.

Shinseki will testify May 15 before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, CNN also learned.

The Shinseki subpoena will

cover emails that allegedly discussed the destruction of a secret list of veterans waiting for care at a Phoenix VA hospital, CNN reported.

The panel agreed to issue the subpoena in a voice vote Thursday morning. The vote on the House Veterans Affairs Committee comes as Shinseki begins to face calls — from Congress and beyond — for his resignation. In an interview with CBS News, Shinseki brushed aside those calls, while acknowledging that the Phoenix controversy "makes me angry."

Shinseki has placed top Phoenix officials on leave as the de-

partment investigates. As many as 40 veterans, perhaps on a secret list, may have died because of delayed treatment at that hospital.

Lawmakers said that a prior response from Shinseki did not adequately answer the committee's questions.

Meanwhile, Shinseki, a retired Army general, told CBS that he



Shinseki

sent inspectors to Phoenix immediately when he learned of reports about the deaths.

On Monday, the head of the American Legion said Shinseki and top department leadership should step down following reports of delays and neglect that contributed to patient deaths at several VA facilities.

While the Veterans of Foreign Wars declined to join the call, other veterans organizations, as well as some top Republican lawmakers, have also said Shinseki should resign.

The White House has voiced support for the secretary amid the calls for his ouster.

Taliban announce start of spring attacks

By JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

The Taliban announced on Thursday the start of their annual spring offensive, promising that the ongoing departure of international combat troops will not mean an end to the insurgency.

"If the invaders or their internal stooges believe that reducing the number of foreign forces will dampen our Jihadist fervor then they are sadly mistaken and should understand that due to our Islamic principles ... it is obligatory upon every Muslim to expel them," the Taliban said in a statement posted on their website.

The warmer spring and summer months have typically seen an uptick in fighting, but this year's operations would come at an especially pivotal time in the 13-year insurgency.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force is actively withdrawing troops from Afghanistan as Afghan forces take responsibility for security across the country. Last summer marked the first year when Afghan forces were considered squarely in the lead.

The Taliban say their spring offensive will begin on Monday, which would put it in the middle of the ongoing Afghan presidential election.

Both Afghan and NATO officials dismissed the statement as empty threats.

"All have seen that the enemies have warned of disrupting the election, but they could do nothing and we had a successful election in the country," Dawlat Waziri, deputy spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry, told Stars and Stripes. "This is just a propaganda of the enemies."

Despite threats and a campaign of violence across the country, the Taliban were unable to disrupt the first round of voting on April 5, in which as many as 7 million Afghans are estimated to have cast ballots.

A runoff round between the top two presidential candidates is expected to occur in June.

"This statement by the Taliban is simply a reiteration of previous years' rhetoric and not reflective of the situation on the ground as it is today," ISAF officials said in a statement provided to Stars and Stripes. "The [Afghan National Security Force] has earned the support of the Afghan people and the people have embraced them. The people have shown their rejection of the Taliban narrative by turning out in record numbers to vote in the elections."

The name the Taliban chose for their spring operation this year, "Khaibar," carries special significance for the insurgent group. Khaibar refers to a seventh-century battle in which Muslim armies expelled "enemies of Islam" from forts in which they had barricaded

themselves in what is now Saudi Arabia.

"By taking this name as a good omen for the current year, we ask Allah ... to completely cleanse our country from the filth of the infidels and let their large bases be liberated, Allah willing," the Taliban said in the statement.

The statement outlined the Taliban's targets.

"Like previous years, the main target of the current year's blessed Jihad operation shall be the foreign invaders and their backers under various names like spies, military and civilian contractors and everyone working for them like translators, administrators and logistics personnel," the statement said.

The group also declared open season on Afghan government, military, police and intelligence officials, including judges and prosecutors who have jailed insurgents.

The Taliban said their operations would be designed to inflict maximum loss on "the invaders" while sparing Afghan civilians, but the statement warned civilians to desist "from backing the foreign infidel invaders and to come out of the enemy ranks."

In the weeks surrounding the election, the Taliban launched a series of spectacular attacks, many of which targeted foreign and Afghan civilians.

On election day, no high-profile

attacks were carried out, but ISAF officials described the day as "one of the most violent," as smaller attacks and fighting was widespread in more rural areas.

Afghan security officials said at the time that the election indicated their forces are up to the task of dealing with insurgent activity.

Ahmad Majidiyar, a senior researcher with the conservative American Enterprise Institute in Washington, said he thinks the Taliban will likely focus on spectacular attacks aimed at undermining the Afghan government and proving the movement is still around, rather than trying to launch head-on combat operations against the still-formidable number of foreign and Afghan troops. But that won't prevent an overall uptick in fighting.

"There will be a significant rise in violence in coming months," he said.

"The end of poppy harvest usually coincides with the peak of Taliban attacks; seasonal fighters will join the Taliban ranks as religious seminars in Pakistan go into a recess in summer; and, most importantly, the Taliban suffered an image problem after failing to disrupt the elections, so it will redouble its efforts to undermine the upcoming second round."

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report. smith.josh@stripes.com
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MIDEAST



MINHAH GALUSTO/The Washington Post

Afghullah, Irshadullah and Said Hussein — all interpreters working for the U.S. Army in Afghanistan — meet Oct. 20 at Afghullah's home in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. They are among 6,000 Afghan interpreters who applied for U.S. visas through a special program tailored to American government employees.

More Afghan interpreters being approved for visas

By ERNESTO LONDONO
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The State Department has dramatically ramped up the approval of resettlement visas for Afghan military interpreters this year under a program that a bipartisan group of lawmakers is seeking to extend and expand, arguing that the system has failed many linguists who remain in mortal danger.

Under a bill members of the House and Senate planned to introduce Thursday, the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program, which is set to stop receiving applications this fall, would continue to run until the end of 2015 and be open to 3,000 additional petitioners.

The legislation would enable Afghan interpreters who have been approved for resettlement to immigrate with parents, siblings and adult children who can independently demonstrate that they are in danger.

Afghans who worked for American news outlets and nongovernmental organizations, as well as those who worked for U.S. troops but were nominally paid by the international military coalition, also would become eligible for resettlement if the bill becomes law. Those criteria also applied to Iraqi interpreters.

As the U.S. military draws down this year, lawmakers say they feel compelled to do more to help Afghans who are under threat for their work on behalf of the United States.

"We have frankly fallen short of the mark," said Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., who is sponsoring the House version of the bill with Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., a former Air Force pilot who served in Afghanistan. "It is clear that these people are at risk and that the situation is likely to get

'America is going to have to go to war again someday, and there is nothing more important than the ability to follow through on our word.'

Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill.
former Air Force pilot who served in Afghanistan

worse rather than better."

Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., are leading the effort in the Senate. Lawmakers and several U.S. veterans of the Afghan War have assailed the State Department and other agencies involved in processing the visas, saying that the program has been beset by years-long delays, arbitrary rejections and opposition from some senior officials who have argued that the program is accelerating Afghanistan's brain drain.

"America is going to have to go to war again someday, and there is nothing more important than the ability to follow through on our word," Kinzinger said in an interview.

Earlier this year, Congress demanded that the State Department start releasing data each quarter disclosing how many applications have been rejected; the number of rejections at each step of the process; and the reasons for delays in cases that have been in the pipeline for more than nine months.

Additionally, changes to the program codified in the National Defense Authorization Act, signed into law in January, now require that the State Department explain in a letter its rationale for each rejection. In the past, after waiting for years, some applicants received bare rejection forms that branded them as security threats.

Marie Harf, a State Department spokeswoman, said in an emailed statement that the department has made significant strides in processing visas for Afghan interpreters in recent months by streamlining each step.

So far this year, the State Department has issued more than 1,600 visas to principal applicants and roughly 2,800 to eligible relatives, a category that currently includes spouses and unmarried children under age 21. That exceeds the number of visas issued in all years combined since the program was established in 2009. Still, the cases of more than 5,600 interpreters have yet to be adjudicated.

"The State Department and the other U.S. government departments and agencies involved in the Special Immigrant Visa process have the highest respect for the men and women who take enormous risks in helping our military and civilian personnel," Harf wrote. "We are committed to helping those who — at great personal risk — have helped us."

That sentiment is at odds with what many Afghans have experienced, according to interpreters and their advocates. Many who have been rejected or have given up on waiting for responses have spent their life savings on smugglers who offer to get them to Europe or Australia by boat — journeys that sometimes have ended fatally.

Prosecutor: Shooting of dad, a vet suffering from PTSD, justified

By LISA RATHKE
The Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. — A teenager's fatal shooting of a troubled Army veteran father who threatened his family then tossed the child a loaded gun was legally justified, a Vermont prosecutor said Wednesday.

No charges will be filed against the child of Kyrin Miner, 44, a veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, who was shot and killed inside the family's Essex Junction home last month.

Miner had threatened to kill his four children, physically assaulted his wife and threw a loaded handgun to the teen who came to her aid.

"Do you want to play the gun game?" Miner — who served in the 82nd Airborne Division and was sniper qualified — asked the teen, according to authorities. The teen said no, but fired six shots when Miner pulled another gun from a bag. Miner was hit five times.

"The teenager reasonably believed the siblings and mother were all in imminent danger of being killed or suffering great bodily harm," Chittenden County State's Attorney T.J. Donovan said. Miner was armed, pointed the gun at his wife and child and "acted with an extreme indifference to the value of human life," he said.

Miner had served tours of duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and Panama. He had been public about his struggle with PTSD, appearing on a Chicago TV station to talk about the Lone Survivor Foundation, which helps wounded veterans return to civilian life and offers retreats to service members diagnosed with combat-related PTSD.

Hours before he was killed, Miner, a fitness trainer who also

worked as a military contractor, had begun acting erratically after attending a wedding with his wife and two of their children, Donovan said. He became verbally then physically abusive toward his wife, who in the past had been able to calm him, Donovan said.

It was his wife's scream that prompted the teen to go to the parents' bedroom, where the final altercation happened.

Miner had three daughters and a son, ages 7 to 18. Authorities are not releasing the name or age of the child who fired the fatal shots.

"We want to protect the privacy of the young person and what we don't want to do is have this young person have to publicly answer for this act for the rest of their lives," Donovan said.

The Associated Press is not publishing the names of the children.

Miner had pointed a gun at his wife and children and threatened to shoot them in another incident more than a year ago, but it was never reported to law enforcement, Donovan said.

Miner served more than 25 years in the armed forces, including multiple tours. In 2010, he served in Afghanistan with the Vermont National Guard. He retired recently due to health issues, his family said, but never forgot about his fellow comrades.

"Kryn was a wonderful and loving husband, as well as a fantastic and dedicated father to his four children," his family said in a statement, also thanking the local community and police.

He had been dealing with severe mental health issues that were the result of his long and dedicated service in the military, said the family, who had moved from New York to Vermont last year.

"Although Kryn had been under the care of professionals for mental injuries, the fight did not end when he left the war. In a way it was just beginning," the family said.

An online fundraising campaign for the family had more than doubled its \$10,000 goal as of Wednesday.

Bomb kills 9 people in western Afghanistan

KABUL — A late-night roadside bombing killed nine people and wounded two in Afghanistan's western Herat province, a provincial spokesman said Wednesday.

The attack took place in the provincial capital of Herat district around midnight Tuesday, when the vehicle the victims were riding in hit the roadside bomb, said provincial government spokesman Samih Wafa.

All the victims are from the same family and were on their way from one village to another

when the bomb exploded, Wafa added.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, which came hours after another roadside bombing in the province killed three policemen and wounded two others. On Monday, another roadside bombing in Herat killed four policemen and wounded four others.

Afghan security forces are frequently targeted by insurgents and violence has intensified in the country as most international troops prepare to withdraw at the end of the year.

From The Associated Press

MILITARY

Bill: Democrats' move for base closings is rejected

FROM FRONT PAGE

In addition to the 1 percent pay raise, the DOD wants to cut subsidies to base supermarkets from \$1.4 billion to \$400 million annually, reduce housing allowances until servicemembers pay about 5 percent for residences and utilities, and consolidate the Tricare health care system.

The House draft budget includes measures to poll troops and study commissaries, but otherwise ignores the DOD personnel recommendations. It is now headed to the House floor for a final vote later this month.

The Democratic minority tried to offset some of the budget spending by initiated a new round of military base closures and sidelining 11 of the Navy's Ticonderoga-class cruisers. The proposals gained no traction Wednesday during the House debate.

Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., introduced the proposal to trigger the Base Realignment and Closure act, which would mean a review and possible closure of military facilities. The last BRAC process began in 2005 and remains controversial; critics contend that projected savings from that round have never been realized.

"This is going to need to be done in terms of saving money," Smith said. "We are simply not in a position to have the Department of Defense spending money on facilities they do not need."

But Smith pulled the amendment and said he would introduce it to the full House later.

He also proposed to take the cruisers off duty following a budget recommendation by the Navy that would save about \$4 billion over five years.

"The Navy looked at their entire situation ... and concluded one of the best things they could do is this plan, to save a little money and spend it elsewhere," Smith said.

But the cruisers will be seaworthy for years to come and Republicans on the committee rose up against the measure to take them out of service and do a refurbishment.

"We are going to take ships out of active duty that have 10 years left in their service life," Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va. "It just doesn't make sense to me."

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AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters sit on the tarmac at the National Guard facility in Morrisville, N.C., on Feb. 6. The House budget proposal would allow the Army National Guard to keep its Apaches.

House debates budget proposals

By Travis J. Tritten
Stars and Stripes

The House Armed Services Committee debated into the night Wednesday, adding or striking a variety of new proposals for the 2015 defense budget. Here's a rundown:

■ An effort by Democrats to take sexual assault prosecutions out of the military chain of command was defeated in a 28-34 vote by the committee, despite strong and emotional support from some members. The military has strongly opposed such proposals, and House opponents said commanders should retain control and be held accountable for their decisions.

■ Lawmakers approved a measure to protect tobacco sales in base exchanges. Bill sponsor Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., who served in the Marine Corps, said young servicemembers should have the right to smoke or chew, and lawmakers who support base tobacco bans should "just outlaw war" because it also damages servicemember health.

■ A proposal requiring that the Department of Defense Inspector General report on a recent rash of misconduct among the military's top brass be made public was dropped by its sponsor, Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., who had said

Americans "shouldn't depend on media leaks for accountability."

■ The Army National Guard attack helicopters under the House budget. Congressman Joe Wilson, R-S.C., and Bill Enyart, D-Ill., added an item that bars the DOD from transferring all the helicopters over to the Army, saying the planned move "dramatically reduces the National Guard's ability to maintain combat capability."

■ Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Ga., added \$10 million to the defense budget for science research at historically black colleges, though he said the funding is still short of what is needed. "Some of the most important and advanced scientific research in the nation is taking place" at such institutions, he said.

■ Johnson was also successful in adding a proposal that blocks the DOD from enforcing new hair and grooming standards for female soldiers. For now, the amendment is redundant. After an outcry from soldiers and the Congressional Black Caucus, which claimed the hair regulations were racist, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said last month the rules would not be enforced pending a review.

■ The House added a measure blocking new Department of Labor minimum-wage standards

for contract workers at base concession stands. The change has significantly boosted pay for low-wage workers but amendment sponsor Rep. Scott Rigell, R-Va., whose district covers Virginia Beach Navy facilities, said the higher employee pay requirements were causing base concessionaires to close shop. Opponents of the amendment said it was attempting to "undermine an effort to help the lowest wage earners" in the country.

■ New regulations on the production and use of alternative biofuels by the military were passed. Two amendments lifted a requirement that the DOD procure biofuels that are proven to be cheaper than standard oil-derived fuels and barred the DOD from building any biofuel refinery unless Congress passes a new law specifically allowing the move.

■ Rep. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., floated a proposal to stop giving money to the Navy for littoral combat ships until the service presents its long-term strategy for the crafts. Opponents who shot down the measure said more LCSs are badly needed and that Congress has already "done over-sight almost ad nauseum."

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AF sets billions for new bomber

By TONY CAPACCA
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Air Force projects that its annual spending on long-range bombers will almost double after 2019 as it seeks a new stealth aircraft that may pit Northrop Grumman against a joint bid from Lockheed Martin and Boeing.

The service's total budget for bomber production and upgrades will jump to about \$9.5 billion in fiscal 2020 from less than \$5 billion for the year beginning Oct. 1, according to a Pentagon document obtained by Bloomberg News. After that, spending would remain greater than \$9 billion a year before dropping to \$8 billion in fiscal 2024.

"The current goal is to achieve an initial capability in the mid-2020s" for the new Long-Range Strike Bomber while also upgrading the B-2 stealth bomber made by Falls Church, Va.-based Northrop and the older non-stealth B-1 and B-52, according to the plan that said it may buy as many as 100 of the new aircraft in a program that may cost \$55 billion, generating billions of dollars in revenue for the contractor chosen to build it.

Bethesda, Md.-based Lockheed, the biggest U.S. government contractor, and Chicago-based Boeing, which is No. 2, said in October that they planned to bid on the project as a team. Northrop Grumman, which has the advantage of its experience on the B-2, hasn't announced that it intends to bid.

The report doesn't incorporate the constraints of the automatic budget cuts called sequestration, which are scheduled to resume in fiscal 2016.

In addition to funding for bomber programs, the Pentagon report, "Annual Aviation Inventory and Funding Plan" for fiscal years 2015 to 2044, outlines long-range plans for fighters, drones and helicopters.

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MILITARY

Say what?

A sample of reader comments from stripes.com



Should Shinseki go or stay?

On Monday, the head of the American Legion called on Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki, to step down, pointing to recent management failures, some of which are allegedly connected to the deaths of veterans waiting for care. Some top GOP lawmakers have joined the chorus, but Shinseki says he will stay.

Readers respond:

Maybe it's time to bring in someone who has experience outside of government/military to run the VA.

— otismreedleman

The VA isn't a business, it is an organization that makes NO money ... how exactly do you have a business mentality for an organization like that?

— hiruu

I agree. Its salvation army image contributes to the inefficiency. But if they run it like a business, instead of a free clinic, soup kitchen, homeless shelter things will change.

— Thecalmvoiceofreason

I've worked for Shinseki, and he was great. My hat is off to him for taking over the VA job; nobody will ever not get fired from that post, it's only a question of how long before some dang thing or other surfaces. Perhaps if the chief had carte blanche to clean house AND replace folks quickly....

— ReggieDunlap

He is great, but, he is in way over his head. He needs to quit.

— disqus_jrCdmAu8t

Who wouldn't be in way over their head? Replacing him wouldn't solve the systemic problems, many of which are caused by Congressionally-mandated processes.

— jdjd

The problem with the VA runs long and deep. Poor service, smug attitudes and a knowledge that there is no valid complaint system available to the veteran is all indicators that the employees of this organization are not worried about the veteran.

— John Arnez

Join the fray at:
stripes.com/go/shinseki

Will wage hike close restaurants on bases?

Labor Department is asked to block wage increase for military's fast-food chains

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — One of the first fruits of a series of one-day strikes by low-wage employees of federal contractors last year was the broadening of a Labor Department rule to make fast-food workers on military bases eligible for a health-and-welfare benefit of \$3.81 an hour.

The promise was enhanced in February when President Barack Obama signed an executive order to raise the minimum wage for

workers on new federal contracts from \$7.25 to \$10.10 an hour beginning in January.

But those increases — part of Democrats' efforts to raise stagnant wages and begin to address the nation's growing economic inequality — are now bumping up against economic reality in a way that could test the resolve of Obama and other Democrats.

Republican lawmakers and Defense Department officials say the wage increases could drive many fast-food restaurants and the thou-

sands of jobs they provide away from military bases. They have asked the Obama administration to exempt fast-food concessions on bases from the wage increases.

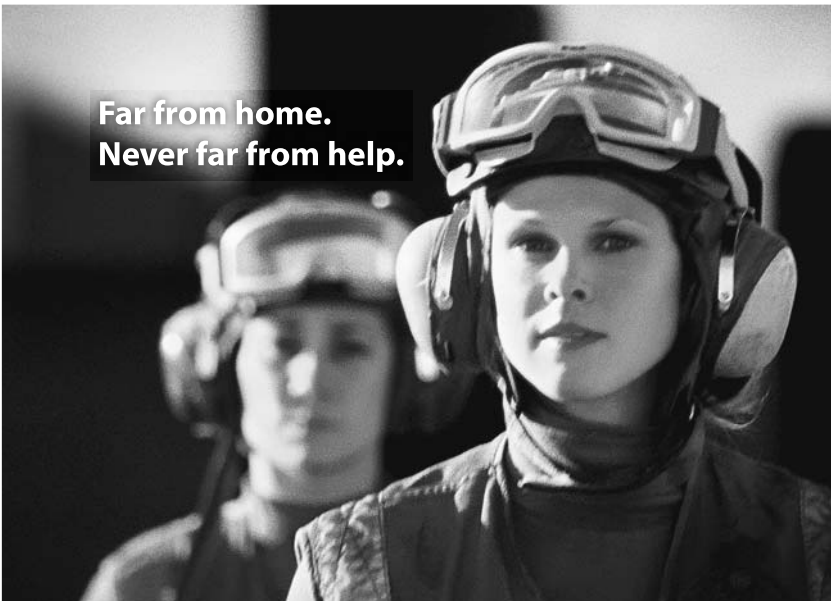
Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., said in an interview that "the unintended consequence of hiking the minimum wage is to ultimately close fast-food restaurants on military installations." He noted that military officials and lobbyists for the industry say that several have already closed across the country.

Wilson was among 40 lawmakers

who signed a letter asking the Labor Department to exempt military installations from the increases. The department is reviewing the increases, but supporters are urging the agency not to back down.

"I hope the Labor Department upholds the wage and offers to work with those franchises to find some way to meet the intent of the order," said Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz. "It is not like this will mean economic ruin for these companies."

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EUROPE

Library at Aviano delayed after contractor defaults

By KENT HARRIS
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Those hoping to use the new base library here might want to consider an additional tour in Italy.

After a series of delays, the \$2.2 million facility on Area 1 was supposed to open this spring. A revised timeline now calls for the facility to open in summer 2016.

The latest delay is due to the fact that the Italian contractor for the project has defaulted, according to Mark Schluter, deputy base civil engineer.

The revised timeline includes canceling the existing contract, advertising and awarding a new one and then completing construction. The facility initially was expected to be completed by the end of 2009.

It's not the first time that a contractor has defaulted while working on a project at Aviano. The U.S. military is required to follow a series of regulations on any construction project that often give the contract to the low-



Officials at Aviano Air Base, Italy, had hoped that community members would be using a new library this month.

est qualified bidder. At Aviano, that has sometimes resulted in a contractor's submitting a bid it later judges too low to complete

the project and then asking for more money.

The military isn't legally allowed to provide more money in such cases, Schluter said.

MATI Sud SPA, of Taranto, Italy, was awarded the contract to demolish the existing library and build a new two-story facility between the kindergarten and youth center and the education center. The foundation and much of the exterior were completed, but the contractor failed to meet conditions set in the contract, Schluter said.

The Italian court system will determine how much the contractor is still owed or how much the contractor will have to pay back, he said.

It's possible the library might cost more than its current price tag, depending on the terms of the new contract.

A temporary library was set up in Area 2 before the old one was demolished.

Unless the base can find a new temporary home for it on the flight line or Area 1, it could cost



PHOTOS BY KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

The library under construction at Aviano Air Base, Italy, scheduled to open this spring, is not likely to open until summer 2016.

millions of dollars more.

Pending other construction, the base hopes to close Area 2 by the end of the year and eventually to turn it back to Italian authorities.

Officials estimate it costs millions of dollars in utilities, maintenance and personnel to maintain Area 2, and its planned closure is part of an ongoing Air Force initiative to reduce facilities and costs.

The library is one of the last projects of Aviano 2000, a \$600 million-plus program launched in 1999 to turn a little-used base into the home of the 31st Fighter Wing. Much of the funding has come from NATO, and one of the numerous delays involved Spain putting a hold on funds until an unrelated matter was resolved.

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Kaiserslautern gauging interest in private, international school

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — City planners are floating the idea of opening a private school in Kaiserslautern that would teach an internationally recognized curriculum mostly in English.

The International School Kaiserslautern would serve the international and local communities in the greater Kaiserslautern area, said Andrea Oliver, the director of U.S. relations for the city.

Before any school bells ring, the city first must determine whether there are enough potential students in the region to sustain the school.

The city would need positive feedback from between 180 and 200 potential students to move forward, Oliver said.

Tuition would range from 12,500 to 17,000 euros (about \$17,400 to \$23,600) annually, based on grade level.

To that end, the city, with support from the regional nonprofit

association ZukunftsRegion Westpfalz, is circulating two online questionnaires, one for families and one for international corporations. The surveys are available in English and German on the city's website, <http://www.kaiserslautern.de/>. Questions include whether companies provide an educational allowance and, if not, whether a family could afford the tuition.

Backers of the plan also are assessing what age groups or grade levels are needed from prekindergarten through 12th grade. The city has extended the deadline to accept completed surveys through the end of May.

"We are trying to formally establish the need in our region," Oliver said.

The city has some anecdotal evidence that there is a need.

"We keep hearing over the years that there is a big clientele of individuals in the Kaiserslautern areas — German, American and other nationalities — who are not part of the military system" and

therefore don't have free access to Department of Defense schools on base, Oliver said. "They would like to put their children in an international school system that allows them to be able to transfer back into other schools in Canada, Italy, other NATO countries" after they leave Germany.

Those families currently either enroll their children in German schools or leave their dependents at home, while one parent works abroad, Oliver said. Some also pay to send their children to a DOD school on base, she said.

About 220,000 people live in Kaiserslautern city and the surrounding county of Kaiserslautern, a figure that doesn't include the approximately 55,000 Americans who are not registered with German authorities because they fall under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, according to Oliver.

The school could serve dependents of U.S. contractors and those working for NATO countries that don't have their own

school system here, among others, she said.

In the Kaiserslautern Military Community, 91 students pay for tuition to attend a base school, according to an official with Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe. Those include children of Air Force and Army contractors, foreign service workers and U.S. companies. The family member must have base access. Annual tuition costs between \$23,000 and \$26,500 per student.

The city's international population is diverse, with residents representing more than 140 nations, excluding SOFA-status members, Oliver said.

Many of those are students or instructors at one of the city's two universities or researchers with the area's scientific institutes, Oliver said.

Several major and smaller U.S. companies are located in Kaiserslautern, including Corning, Fruit of the Loom, Avid, Celanese and John Deere.

John Deere opened its European technology and innovation center in Kaiserslautern about six years ago, Oliver said, one of only three John Deere research facilities worldwide.

The school would offer an International Baccalaureate educational program. The main language of instruction would be English, with a strong secondary focus on German, Oliver said. The school would offer all-day schooling, including before- and aftercare, according to a brochure published by the regional association.

No location has been determined yet, though the city is looking at several, including the former German military recruiting center, "a nice old villa in a park in the center of town," Oliver said.

"There's no concern about finding enough English instructors, she said.

"Some of the very first replies are all from potential teachers who want to work there," Oliver said.

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Joint Chiefs divided over commissary savings cuts

By TOM PHILPOTT

All seven members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff testified Tuesday on the need to slow growth in military compensation and apply dollars saved to underfunded readiness accounts for training, equipment and spare parts.

But their unified front for easing current budget burdens cracked over the notion of slashing savings for commissary shoppers.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James Amos called the proposal to cut commissary appropriations, from \$1.4 billion yearly down to \$400 million within three years, and the projected cut in average shopper savings from 30 percent down to 10 percent "a sore point for me."

"That's a 66 percent drop in savings for my Marines. I don't like that," Amos told the Senate Armed Services Committee. Families don't either.

"The commissary issue itself is radioactive," Amos said.

At the same hearing, Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr., vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs, defended lowering the appropriation for the Defense Commissary Agency in increments, starting with \$200 million next year, and suggesting the initial impact at least would be modest.

"We think DeCA can find at least the first-year savings through efficiencies, not price increases, especially since we exempted them from the 20 percent staff cuts that everyone else is taking," Win-

nefeld said.

Later, Winnefeld said first-year savings might be achieved if Congress would just repeal a law requiring commissaries to stock only brand names.

It's a law "apparently lobbied for by the food industry," Winnefeld said, which "takes money right out of our people's pockets. It really does."

Industry sources said brand names do generate higher profits for suppliers but the issue is more complex and less disturbing than Winnefeld implied. Brand name suppliers can afford to support DeCA with trade-offs in store services such as free stocking of shelves and with product promotions.

DeCA provided a statement explaining that commissaries evolved by design into a brand-name system to ensure "worldwide availability of quality, recognizable brand-name products such as Kellogg's cereals, Kraft cheeses."

A brand name "bestows a known quality assurance that our military families rely upon wherever they serve. Providing food security and a familiar 'taste of home' is particularly important for those stationed overseas," DeCA said.

Though it doesn't carry generic items, DeCA since 2000 has operated a "best value items" program with name brand products "equal to or cheaper in price than the private labels found downtown," the agency said.

Winnefeld assured senators that

MILITARY UPDATE

the budget plan to squeeze commissaries doesn't order any store closures. The goal is efficiency.

"Whatever they can't ring out of efficiencies would be a price increase," he acknowledged. "So you might go from the 30 percent claimed advantage [in prices] right now ... to 26 percent" that first year.

In looking at the competitiveness of stores in each market, 26 percent savings should ensure that most thrive. But "there are probably situations where you might close one or two," Winnefeld said.

The plan overall, he said, is "a heck of a lot gentler than it looks."

Winnefeld did not describe the impact on commissaries if DeCA takes a \$500 million hit in 2016 and \$1 billion hit starting in 2017, as is also proposed.

Amos didn't either. But he said a better solution to raising prices would be "to force DeCA to become more efficient and figure out how to do it, and don't put that burden on the back of our young enlisted Marines."

"We don't need to turn our back" on making commissaries part of compensation reform, Amos said. "But I think we are going at it the wrong way. I think we ought

to force DeCA to do some of the things that the services have had to do over the last year to try to live within our means."

Base exchanges or department stores used to depend on appropriated dollars too, Amos said, but they were forced at some point to be run like businesses. Commissaries should be made to run as efficiently.

What the commandant did not mention, but that resale officials describe often and openly, is that exchanges, because they are run as businesses, deliver a level of savings about half what commissaries do. Indeed commissary prices are a magnet to bring more exchange shopping.

There were other signs in the hearing that the Joint Chiefs were out of their comfort zone in discussing the military retail store system.

Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., tried to sum up what he just heard on the commissary plan from Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, Joint Chiefs chairman, and from Winnefeld whom Dempsey said "did most of the heavy lifting" on the issue.

"You would like to get efficiencies out of the system" and you believe DeCA "can generate these efficiencies," Reed said. If DeCA can't, "then they are going to have to curtail some of their operations."

Given that, Reed asked Dempsey, have you "thought about a criteria for curtailment ... something other than, 'We'll get some

efficiencies?"

"We have sir," Dempsey said. "And I will tell you that commissaries has been the most difficult issue to wrap our arms around, because it's very difficult to understand the functioning of the commissary, and the effect that a reduction in the subsidy will have, until you make the decision to do it."

That's why, Dempsey said, the first cut would be only \$200 million. Even senior enlisted advisers "say 'Let's see what happens.' Let's see how much efficiency we can ring out of it in order to gain some savings," he added.

If left unaddressed, Dempsey warned, "We will be providing \$1.4 billion in perpetuity" to subsidize grocery shopping, "and that just doesn't seem to be a reasonable course of action."

A day later, the House Armed Services Committee voted for only a \$100 million cut in commissary funding in 2015. Its chairman, Rep. Harold "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., said he rejects increasing out-of-pocket costs for service families.

But McKeon, whose family once ran a popular chain of cowboy clothing stores, also said he knows "efficiencies can be made that reduce the cost of the program without increasing prices."

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA, 20120, email mlupdate@aol.com or twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.

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PACIFIC

US calls China-Vietnam fracas a 'provocation'

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A standoff between Chinese and Vietnamese ships in the South China Sea continued on Thursday, with both sides trading diplomatic barbs and the United States criticizing Beijing for provocative actions.

Chinese officials blamed Vietnam on Thursday for "disruptive activities" in waters claimed by both countries near the uninhabited Paracel Islands, the day after Vietnam released a purported video of Chinese ships ramming Vietnamese vessels and spraying them with water cannons.

The dispute began when China announced on May 3 that it had moved the deep-water oil drilling rig Haiyang Shiyou 981 to within about 150 miles of the Vietnamese coast, and about 30 miles away from the Paracels.

Chinese officials said Thursday that the oil rig was within China's territorial waters. China claims the Paracels and about 90 percent of the South China Sea as its own, based largely on arguments of historical discovery. Most of China's neighbors dispute that claim, based on international law.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a news conference in Beijing on Thursday that the fleet of Vietnamese vessels at the scene "are in viola-

tion of China's sovereign rights." Vietnamese officials on Thursday maintained their claim on the Paracel Islands and its nearby waters, which Hanoi says are within its exclusive economic zone.

However, it is China's aggressive response — involving a fleet of 80 vessels and seven naval warships, according to Vietnam — that has drawn the criticism of U.S. officials.

"(China's) unilateral action appears to be part of a broader pattern of Chinese behavior to advance its claims over disputed territory in a manner that undermines peace and stability in the region," State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said in a statement from Washington. "We are also very concerned about dangerous conduct and intimidation by vessels operating in this area."

The Asia-based U.S. Navy 7th Fleet acknowledged the conflict, but struck a cautious tone on Thursday. Officials declined comment on whether the standoff had affected any naval missions.

"The role of the U.S. Navy forces in the Pacific is to promote security and stability, while also being prepared and ready to execute any missions at any time as directed by leadership," the 7th Fleet released in a statement. "Any provocative or unilateral actions taken by one country could jeopardize the peace and security



COURTESY OF THE VIETNAM COAST GUARD/AP

A Chinese ship, left, shoots a water cannon at a Vietnamese vessel Wednesday while a Chinese Coast Guard ship, center, sails alongside off Vietnam's coast in the South China Sea.

in the region."

Last month, President Barack Obama visited Japan, Malaysia and the Philippines, all of whom have territorial disputes with China. Obama called upon Beijing to resolve its claims without "coercion and intimidation" during a press conference in Manila.

Chinese officials dismissed the U.S. response.

Hua told reporters Thursday in Beijing that the U.S. has no right to make unwarranted remarks on China's sovereign rights and that drilling is "normal and legal," according to The Associated Press.

China's relationship with the U.S. military in the Asia-Pacific region has proven rocky in recent years. Chinese ships surrounded the surveillance ship USNS Impeccable in 2009 when it operated in international waters about 75 miles from China's coastline.

For years afterward, Navy officials accused China of shadowing 7th Fleet ships and blocking their passage.

In 2010 and 2011, China canceled military-to-military exchanges with the U.S. following scheduled arms deals with Taiwan.

The military-to-military relationship has shown signs of improvement lately. China is participating in the U.S.-hosted, multinational RIMPAC exercise in Hawaii in June. Top Navy officials also were on hand in Qingdao last month to agree on rules of conduct in international waters. And last month, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel became the first foreign official to tour China's new aircraft carrier.

However, it's a slow-moving relationship compared with the ties that some Southeast Asian nations are building with Wash-

ington. The Philippines recently signed an accord that will allow U.S. military use of Philippine bases for 10 years. Last month, Vietnam conducted its first at-sea search-and-rescue mission with the USS McCain. The two nations also have been engaging in exercises since 2010.

"The complexity of [Naval Engagement Activity] Vietnam has increased in a measured, incremental way since this engagement began," said Lt. Cmdr. Clay Doss, a spokesman for Commander Task Force 73 in Singapore. "We look forward to making next year's NEA more complex in ways that will enhance our ability to operate with confidence in the maritime domain."

It's unlikely that Vietnam would move toward a Philippine-style agreement with the U.S. military forces, said Euan Graham, senior fellow with the Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.

However, "it would certainly add to the argument of those who would want to press for a closer relationship with the United States," Graham said.

While the next moves in the China-Vietnam standoff are unpredictable, Graham noted that neither side wants to be the one that fires the first live round.

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S. Korea: Drones from North sent to spy on military facilities

By ASHLEY ROWLAND
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Three drones were launched from North Korea for spying purposes and had been programmed to fly over South Korean military installations, the Ministry of National Defense said Thursday.

An MND statement said the "smoking gun" of a joint South Korean-U.S. investigation was an analysis of the drones' flight plans, which showed that all were launched from and intended to return to North Korea. South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported that one drone crashed due to an engine problem while the other two ran out of fuel.

Baek Seung-joo, vice minister of national defense, told reporters that the drones were trying to gain visual intelligence of South Korea and to test whether its air defense system could detect small objects.

The rudimentary, blue drones, which were all similar in size and design, were equipped with cameras and parachutes and, according to the MND, pose a new military threat, even as North Korea is believed to be preparing for its fourth nuclear test.

Baek said the drones did not have the capability to carry a significant load of weapons or the software to provide a live feed to a ground control, indicating the North is in the early stages of de-

veloping unmanned aerial vehicle technology.

"We see this as the beginning stage of ground-level work of UAVs," he said.

However, Baek cited North Korea's "irrational" and "unpredictable" nature in saying drones could pose a threat if Pyongyang tries to load some amount of weaponry onto them.

One drone, found March 24 in the border city of Paju, was launched about 3 miles from the North's town of Kaesong, home to a jointly run industrial complex. Yonhap reported that it had taken photos of the Blue House, the president's office in Seoul, as well as other installations.

Another drone was recovered a week later on the border island of Baeknyeong and was launched from about 17 kilometers southwest of Haeju. Yonhap reported that it had taken photos of troops on two South Korean islands.

A third drone was found last fall on a mountain in Samcheok, in the eastern part of the country, by area residents, though South Korea's military did not announce that discovery until April 6. That drone was launched from about 10.5 miles east of Pyongyang, but no photographs were found on it.

An MND spokesman said the joint investigation team, which formed April 14, included 10 Americans and 15 Koreans. He described the Americans as drone

experts with a wide range of experience in computer software and the technology of small aircraft.

Last month, South Korea issued an interim investigation citing a "striking similarity" in appearance to drone models shown in North Korean media footage in 2012 and 2013, leading investigators to conclude that they were of North Korean origin.

Six fingerprints not traceable in South Korea's national database also were found on two of the drones.

The drones' ability to penetrate South Korean airspace without notice has raised questions about the country's air defense. The MND vowed Thursday to "respond forcefully" to future drone provocations and said efforts are

underway to enhance its ability to monitor and down UAVs.

Yonhap reported that Seoul is trying to buy about 10 low-altitude radars from Israel. It also said North Korea is believed to have built the drones based on Chinese models it obtained in Hong Kong.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this story.
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MILITARY

NASCAR: Senator says Guard 'wasting bunch of money on very expensive sports sponsorship'

FROM FRONT PAGE

In 2013, the number of proposals submitted with NASCAR dropped to 7,500, according to briefing materials for the Senate subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight led by McCaskill. The National Guard needs 1 million leads to meet its annual recruiting goal of 50,000 soldiers.

The NASCAR initiative, along with the \$38 million spent on an IndyCar racing sponsorship, over the same period, will be the target of the hearing led by McCaskill.

The contract entitles the Guard to plaster its logo on the team's car for 20 races, set up mobile recruiting displays at tracks and conduct the NASCAR-affiliated "Race-2-Achieve" recruiting effort in high schools, according to briefing materials for senators.

Breitenfeldt, a National Guard spokesman, said 90 percent of Army National Guard soldiers who enlisted or re-enlisted from 2007 to 2013 indicated that they had been exposed to information about the service through NASCAR-related recruiting and retention materials. Sponsoring NASCAR and driver Dale Earnhardt Jr. puts the Guard's name in front of 77 million fans, he said.

"In today's media-driven environment, a strong branding effort is a good value and helps create a favorable awareness of the National Guard as a career option," Breitenfeldt said in a statement.

NASCAR draws sponsorships from major corporations because they value the return on their investment, said David Higdon, NASCAR's spokesman. Coca-Cola, Sprint and Toyota, he said in an email, "are in NASCAR for

one reason: Because it works."

Earnhardt's win at the Daytona 500, for example, generated the equivalent of millions of dollars in advertising for the Guard, according to marketing research.

The Guard remains alone among the services in continuing its relationship with NASCAR.

"The Army, the Navy, the Marines and the Coast Guard all canceled their sponsorships with NASCAR due to cost, ineffectiveness and difficulty in measuring results," according to the briefing document. "The Army specifically stated that NASCAR was declining against the Army's core target audience and that NASCAR sponsorship had the highest cost per engagement in the Army's portfolio of sponsorships — three times the next highest price."

"The leadership of the Guard is probably more in the target range," McCaskill said. "It's probably something they watch. I'm a fan of NASCAR, too. That's not a slam on NASCAR. It's whether or not tax dollars are being used for the intended purpose."

McCaskill intends to ask whether the sponsorship program included perks for Guard leaders at NASCAR events.

McCaskill has placed the Guard's recruiting under scrutiny. In February, she slammed the Guard for a recruiting bonus program that has resulted in criminal investigations of more than 800 soldiers. They allegedly gamed the system and obtained hundreds of millions in recruiting bonuses. Her subcommittee highlighted as much as \$100 million fraudulently obtained by soldiers.

Report: KBR wants burn pit lawsuits heard by high court

Stars and Stripes

Government contractor KBR has petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to hear arguments in a collection of class-action and individual lawsuits alleging that KBR and former parent company Halliburton acted negligently when operating the burn pits for the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan, exposing troops to toxic fumes and pollutants, the Military Times reported Thursday.

According to the report, Houston-based KBR is arguing that the cases — reportedly 57 in all, with hundreds of plaintiffs — should be heard by the high court because they address issues of constitutional law on combatant activities and contract support.

"In Vietnam, people who were drafted, they drove the trucks, they did the laundry, cooked the food — all the things that have been outsourced by the Army

were done by soldiers," KBR counsel Mark Lowes told the Times. "I don't see us ever going back [to that]. Contractors are going to be tied to the military from here on out, and it behooves the court to tell us how that relationship is going to work."

Last year, a U.S. District Court judge in Maryland dismissed the suits, affirming KBR's defense that it deserved the same protection as the U.S. government from litigation stemming from injuries in war zones.

But a three-judge panel from the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., disagreed, ruling that the lawsuits could continue because KBR had not sufficiently demonstrated it was acting under military orders specifically during burn pit operations or war treatment activities.

The judges concluded the cases need further exploration as to

whether KBR should share the same immunity the military has from litigation over injuries in war zones.

Roughly 10,000 petitions are filed with the Supreme Court each year, and the court elects to hear 75 to 80 cases.

Plaintiffs in these cases say the smoke produced by the open-air burn pits contained toxins such as dioxin and volatile organic compounds that have made them sick, causing respiratory illnesses, neurological disorders and cancer.

They also charge that KBR violated military orders in performing war treatment services, causing troops to fall ill.

The Supreme Court would likely announce in June or October whether it will hear the cases, the Times noted. If it declines, they will continue to be considered in the Maryland U.S. District Court.

AF officer gets jail time, dismissal in drugs case

NEWMARKET, England — An Air Force officer has been sentenced to three months' confinement and dismissal from the service at the close of her court-martial at RAF Lakenheath on Wednesday.

First Lt. Stephanie Frick pleaded guilty to charges of using and distributing ecstasy and mushrooms containing psilocybin, a hallucinogenic substance, a base spokesman wrote in an email.

Her charge sheet states the crimes occurred between September 2011 and April 2013 at or near Rosamond and San Bern-

nardino, Calif.

In January it was reported that an investigation into two officers allegedly involved with illegal drugs at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., had expanded to 10 officers stationed at various bases, including Lakenheath.

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Airman hospitalized after car collides with dump truck

By MATT MILLHAM

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A 39-year-old airman is in serious condition after his BMW collided with a dump truck Thursday morning outside Ramstein Air Base in Germany.

The airman, who has not been identified by German or American authorities, was airlifted to a hospital in Ludwigshafen, roughly 50 miles east of where the accident occurred. A spokeswoman for the German police in nearby Landstuhl said the airman suffered severe head trauma.

The truck and the BMW sedan were headed in opposite directions on the L356 near the Azur outdoor swimming pool. The truck driver told police that the BMW had driven into his lane, causing the crash. A witness told police both vehicles had wandered over the center line.

Because of the damage to the BMW, rescuers had to cut the roof off of the vehicle to extract the airman, who was unconscious.

The truck driver was treated at the scene for minor injuries to his shoulder and torso, police said.

German first responders typically transport patients to German facilities regardless of nationality, a spokeswoman for Landstuhl Regional Medical Center said. The accident happened about 7 miles from LRMK, which is the military's only top-level trauma center overseas. The hospital the victim was airlifted to is also a trauma center.

The accident is at least the second major collision involving an airman in the Ramstein area in the last six months.

In December, an airman died after slamming into a boulder in a one-car crash on the base. Results of the investigation into that crash still haven't been released. Early reports in that case said that Airman 1st Class Jonathan Santos-Carvajal lost control of his car while trying to pass another vehicle.

Stars and Stripes reporter Marcus Kloeckner contributed to this report. millham.matthew@stripes.com

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NATION



PHOTOS BY SUSAN WALSH/AP

President Barack Obama accepts the USC Shoah Foundation Ambassadors for Humanity award and a hug from movie director Steven Spielberg in Los Angeles on Wednesday. Obama plans to spend three days in California to raise money for the Democratic Party.

Big-name stars align for Obama at benefit

By SANDY COHEN
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — President Barack Obama shared a table with Steven Spielberg and Bruce Springsteen at a benefit dinner, but broke away to chat with Barbra Streisand and Samuel L. Jackson.

The president was the guest of honor Wednesday at a fund-raising gala celebrating the USC Shoah Foundation, which Spielberg established 20 years ago to collect video testimonies from survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides.

Inspired by the making of "Schindler's List," the video archive Spielberg created now includes more than 50,000 personal accounts and is available to schools across the globe.

"As long as we fail to learn, our work will be urgent work," he said of the foundation's mission. "This institute exists because we know that the future can always be rewritten."

Obama accepted the foundation's Ambassador for Humanity award at the private event at the Century Plaza Hotel.

Springsteen provided musical entertainment, tucking his black tie into his white shirt to perform two songs with his acoustic guitar.

"I think anyone who has a boss wishes it was you," Spielberg told the stalwart rocker, who sang



Bruce Springsteen performs during the USC Shoah Foundation's 20th anniversary Ambassadors for Humanity gala.

"Promised Land" and "Dancing in the Dark."

The filmmaker called Springsteen "this nation's hardest working lyrical poet for our common humanity."

Conan O'Brien hosted the event, speaking in Yiddish and teasing the president for the traffic snarls he causes when visiting Los Angeles.

"You left Washington six hours ago, but I left Burbank seven hours ago," O'Brien joked.

Liam Neeson, who played Oskar Schindler in Spielberg's 1994 film, opened the evening.

It was two nonfamous women who left the audience most inspired.

San Diego high school teacher Michelle Sadrena Clark recited a poem about how the Shoah Foundation's work enriches her curriculum and connects her students to history.

"Your institute has literally

changed my teaching and my life," she said.

Several of her students attended the gala, where they showed guests the multimedia projects they developed using survivor testimonies.

They were also introduced to the president.

Celina Biniaz was one of the Jews Schindler saved. At 13, she worked in his factory, cleaning the machinery with her small hands.

Now a grandmother whose story is included among the Holocaust testimonies, she said, "Oskar Schindler gave me my life, but Steven Spielberg gave me my voice."

Obama said that genocide survivors and the families they've created are "the ultimate rebuke to evil and the ultimate expression of love and hope."

"You are an inspiration to every single one of us," he said.

Health nominee gets praise from Senate panel

By ERICA WERNER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's nominee for health secretary faced pointed questioning Thursday from Republican senators over the health care law but also won GOP praise in her first appearance before a Senate committee.

Sylvia Mathews Burwell, who will take over implementation of "Obamacare" if she is confirmed as Health and Human Services secretary, told senators that the law has improved the economy, held down the growth of health costs, reduced premiums and expanded coverage.

The law "is making a positive difference," Burwell, who now serves as Obama's budget director, said in testimony before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, the first of two Senate committees that will hold hearings on her nomination.

Republican senators disagreed. The top committee Republican, Sen. Lamar Alexander, of Tennessee, warned her that Republicans hope to retake the Senate in November and scale back the law in numerous ways.

At the same time, Alexander cited Burwell's "reputation for

competence" and Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., declared he plans to vote in favor of her nomination, calling her a "tremendous asset."

The exchanges pointed to a potentially smooth confirmation for Burwell even as her nomination hearings allow Republicans to focus renewed election-year attention on the health law. Burwell was unanimously confirmed by the Senate last year as budget director, and no senator has announced opposition so far to her nomination to the HHS post.

Burwell is Obama's choice to replace Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, who resigned last month after presiding over the passage of the health law and the disastrous rollout of the federal enrollment website.

Although a surge of sign-ups rescued the health law's big enrollment launch from failure, Burwell faces significant challenges in sustaining that momentum next year.

If confirmed, she will preside over a \$1 trillion bureaucracy that rivals the Pentagon in complexity.

The Health Committee won't actually vote on Burwell's nomination, that task falls to the Senate Finance Committee, which has yet to schedule its hearing.

House GOP ready for Benghazi probe

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans are set to begin a special investigation of the deadly attack on the U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, raising the stakes in a political battle with the Obama administration as the midterm election season heats up.

Democrats are considering a boycott of the committee, which was expected to be approved formally when the Republican-led House voted Thursday afternoon. They don't want their presence to provide legitimacy to what they believe will be a partisan forum, yet they don't want to lose the ability to counter Republican claims and provide cover for potential witnesses.

Speaker John Boehner vowed Wednesday that the examination would be "all about getting to the truth" of the Obama administration's response to the attack and would not be a partisan, election-year circus. "This is a serious investigation," he said while ac-

cusing President Barack Obama and his team of withholding the true story of how militants killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans on Sept. 11, 2012.

Democrats voiced wide-ranging concerns over the scope and composition of the select committee. They said they'd make no decision on whether to participate in the panel until Boehner responds to a demand from Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi that he scrap his plan for a committee of seven Republicans and five Democrats. Democrats say membership should be evenly split, and want clearer time and cost constraints for a forum they likened to a "kangaroo court."

Republicans have made Benghazi a central plank of their strategy to wrest control of the Senate from the Democrats in November's traditionally low-turnout midterm elections.

The administration has yet to say if it will cooperate with the select committee.

NATION

Poll: US split on legal pot, against Web bets

By WAYNE PARRY

The Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — Americans are split over whether marijuana should be legalized for recreational use, according to a poll released Thursday. The same poll finds them solidly opposed to online gambling.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University PublicMind poll finds that 50 percent of Americans favor legalizing marijuana use, while 27 percent support legalizing Internet gambling in the 47 states that don't allow it.

Although only New Jersey,

Nevada and Delaware currently allow Internet gambling, at least 10 other states are or recently considered legalizing it.

"Right now, online gambling looks to be a long shot in the court of public opinion," said Krista Jenkins, the poll's director and a professor of political science at the university.

The poll examined public attitudes about two activities that Jenkins said are taking place whether legal or not.

It found that 65 percent of respondents are not closely following news about Internet gambling.

But when asked if they favor or oppose allowing casinos to run online gambling for people in their states, 63 percent are opposed, with 27 percent approving. The numbers are largely unchanged from when similar questions were asked in 2012 and 2010.

In contrast, far more Americans are paying attention to news on marijuana legalization, with 86 percent saying say they've heard of or read about legalization efforts.

By a ratio of 2-to-1, Democrats (63 percent) favor legalization more than Republicans (32 percent), with independents (58 per-

cent) more closely aligned with Democrats.

Young people also are far more supportive of legalization, with 65 percent of the millennial generation and more than half of Gen Xers (56 percent) in favor, compared with fewer than half (48 percent) of baby boomers and about a third (36 percent) of the World War II generation.

"Democrats see getting high as a lifestyle choice, whereas Republicans are more likely to understand it through the prism of morality and social deviance," Jenkins said. "However, the age differences we're seeing suggest

that legal (pot) smoking in the future is more a question of 'when' rather than 'if.'"

Washington and Colorado have legalized recreational marijuana use, and several other states are considering it. Numerous others have approved medical marijuana use.

The nationwide poll of 1,151 adults ages 18 and older who live in the United States was conducted by telephone with both land lines and cellphones from April 21-27. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.9 percentage points.



MINE GROLL/AP

Bryan Preston, left, of Hannaford supermarkets, talks with job seekers during a job fair at Columbia-Greene Community College in Hudson, N.Y., in April.

Applications for jobless benefits decline to 319K

By CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell 26,000 last week to 319,000, the latest sign that the job market is slowly improving.

The drop follows two weeks of increases that reflected mostly temporary layoffs around the Easter holiday. The holiday can cause an uptick in layoffs of bus drivers, cafeteria workers and other school workers during spring break. Those earlier increases caused the four-week average of applications, a less volatile number, to rise 4,500 to a seasonally adjusted 324,750.

With the impact of the holiday fading, applications are returning to pre-recession levels. The average fell in early April to 312,000, the fewest since October 2007. The recession officially began in December 2007.

Applications are a proxy for layoffs, and so the decline suggests that companies are cutting fewer jobs.

About 2.69 million people are receiving benefits, 76,000 fewer than in the previous week. That figure has fallen nearly 11 percent in the past year. An additional 1.3 million people lost benefits when an emer-

gency program that had provided up to 47 extra weeks of aid expired at the end of 2013.

Employers have stepped up hiring in recent months. The economy gained 288,000 jobs in April, the most in 2½ years, the government said last week.

In addition, the unemployment rate plunged to 6.3 percent from 6.7 percent. That drop occurred because fewer people looked for work. The government doesn't count people as unemployed unless they are actively searching.

In the past three months, employers have added an average of 238,000 jobs per month, up from 194,000 per month last year. The improved hiring should help boost economic growth for the rest of this year.

The economy barely expanded in the first three months of the year, growing at an annual rate of just 0.1 percent. That was largely because a brutal winter kept consumers away from shopping malls, shut down factories and discouraged home and car sales.

Many signs suggest that the economy has rebounded since then as the weather has warmed. Most analysts estimate that the economy is growing at a healthy annual pace of about 3.5 percent in the current April-June quarter.

How high is too high to drive? States find no easy answers

By ROB HOTAKAINEN

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Josephine Drum says her daughter was "cheated out of life" when she was killed while driving to work in downtown Seattle in 2012, hit by a man in a Jeep whose blood tested positive for marijuana.

"I feel if you smoke marijuana and you have to smoke it, that you should not be able to drive under the influence," said Drum, of Stockton, Calif. "I'm 84 years old. To have lost my daughter is something hard for me to accept."

With the push to legalize marijuana surging in popularity, states want to assure the public that roads will be safe. But they face a perplexing question: How stoned is too stoned to drive?

"The answer is: Pretty damned stoned is not as dangerous as drunk," said Mark Kleiman, professor of public policy at the University of California, Los Angeles, who served as Washington state's top pot consultant.

He said Washington state has a law that's far too strict and could lead to convictions of sober drivers, with many not even knowing whether they're abiding by the law.

With no conclusive research, states are all over the map as they try to assess intoxication by measuring blood levels of THC,

the main ingredient in marijuana.

There's no easy way to do it, with marijuana stored in fat cells and detectable in blood long after it's smoked or consumed, for days or weeks, depending on individual tolerance and level of use.

Washington state and Colorado, the only two states to fully legalize marijuana, have set a limit of 5 nanograms of active THC per milliliter of blood. In Washington state, legalization proponents included the language in the ballot initiative approved by voters in 2012.

"It appealed to the voters, but it's nonsense — it's not a good measure of whether somebody's impaired or not," Kleiman said. "The fact that legislatures will not do their job on this means we go through the cockamamie initiative process — it's a lousy way to write legislation."

In California, much to Drum's disappointment, lawmakers last week rejected an even tougher standard. The state's Assembly Committee on Public Safety voted to kill a bill that would have set the limit at 2 nanograms per milliliter of blood, rejecting the pleas of police officers.

In Arizona, the state Supreme Court last month struck down part of the state's zero-tolerance law, saying it could result in convictions of sober drivers.

Ore. police say handcuffing of girl, 9, uncovers a policy gap

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — A Portland police officer told a citizen oversight panel Wednesday night that a case in which officers handcuffed a 9-year-old girl shows an area where the police department has a policy gap.

The department has set up a work group to examine its juvenile custody directives, posting the directives on its website Wednesday and inviting public comment.

"This is an area where the Police Bureau has identified a gap in policy," Capt. Dave Famous said. He told the citizen panel he'll update it next month on the work group's progress.

The little girl's mother, Latoya Harris, is disturbed that two officers who handcuffed her daughter in May 2013 and took her to

headquarters to have her fingerprints and mugshot taken were not disciplined. She appealed to the citizen panel to take some action. Portland police previously had said the officers were following police bureau policy, The Oregonian reported.

"Please make sure this does not happen to another child," Harris told the committee tearfully. "No child should be treated like that."

Two officers investigating a fight at a youth club came to the girl's home, handcuffed her as she stood in a bathing suit and led her away to be processed on a fourth-degree assault charge.

The girl's mother wasn't allowed to accompany her in the police car, and the girl was held for an hour.

Prosecutors didn't take the case to trial.

WORLD



PHOTOS BY DARKO VOJNOVIC/AP

Above: A pro-Russia gunman stands behind barricades and shows his hunting rifle in front of the flag of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic in the center of Sloviansk, eastern Ukraine, on Thursday. Below: The head of the elections commission of the Donetsk People's Republic, Denis Pushilin, center foreground, informs the media about the referendum during a press conference.

Pro-Russians to hold referendum in east Ukraine

By PETER LEONARD
The Associated Press

DONETSK, Ukraine — The pro-Russia insurgency in eastern Ukraine decided Thursday to go ahead with Sunday's referendum on autonomy despite a call from Russian President Vladimir Putin to delay it.

While Putin's call on Wednesday to postpone the vote was seen as part of an effort to step back from confrontation and negotiate a deal with the West, he fueled tensions again Thursday by overseeing military exercises that Russian news agencies said simulated a massive retaliatory nuclear strike in response to an enemy attack.

Putin said the exercise involving Russia's nuclear forces had been planned back in November, but it came as relations between Russia and the West have plunged to their lowest point since the Cold War.

On the ground in Ukraine, many have feared that the referendum could be a flashpoint for further violence between Ukrainian troops and the pro-Russia militants who have seized govern-

ment buildings in about a dozen cities in the east.

The decision to hold the vote as planned was unanimous, said Denis Pushilin, co-chairman of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic.

He said the suggestion to postpone the referendum "came from a person who indubitably cares for the population of the south-east" of Ukraine and thanked Putin for his efforts to find a way out of the situation. "But we are just a bullhorn for the people," Pushilin said. "We just voice what the people want and demonstrate through their actions."

The question on the ballot is: "Do you support the act of proclamation of independent sovereignty for the Donetsk People's Republic?"

Despite the phrasing, the organizers have said that only after the vote will they decide whether they want actual independence, greater autonomy within Ukraine or annexation by Russia.

A poll released Thursday showed that a strong majority of Ukrainians want their country to remain a single, unified state and



this was true even in the largely Russian-speaking east where the pro-Russia insurgency has been fighting for autonomy.

The poll conducted last month by the Washington-based Pew Research Center found that 77 percent of people nationwide want Ukraine to maintain its current borders, while nearly as many, or 70 percent, in the east feel the same. Only among Russian speakers does the percentage drop significantly, but it is still over half at 58 percent.

The central government in Kiev has the confidence of only about 41 percent of Ukrainians, with a sharp divide between the west of the country, where support is 60 percent, and the east, where it is a low 24 percent, according to the poll.

Russia, however, is viewed with great suspicion, with three times as many Ukrainians surveyed saying Russia is having a bad influence on their country as say its impact is positive.

In Crimea, which Russia an-

nexed in March following a referendum, 93 percent of people surveyed expressed confidence in Putin and said Russia was playing a positive role on the peninsula. Their confidence in President Barack Obama, on the other hand, was recorded at a dismal 4 percent.

In a parallel survey Pew conducted in Russia last month, 61 percent agreed that there are parts of neighboring countries that belong to Russia. The 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union left many ethnic Russians in other countries, including a swath of eastern and southern Ukraine that Putin had described as historically Russian territory.

In another echo of Putin, 55 percent of Russian surveyed said they saw the Soviet collapse as a great tragedy.

The poll in Ukraine was conducted April 5-23 among 1,659 adults, and the one in Russia April 4-20 among 1,000 adults. Both have a margin of error of about 3.5 percentage points.

Report: Gross human rights abuses seen in S. Sudan

By JASON STRAZIUSO
The Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — Horrific, ethnically motivated attacks of physical and sexual violence launched in South Sudan by warring parties constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, Amnesty International said Thursday, while a new U.N. report said more than 300 people from one ethnic group were slaughtered in one incident.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said during a visit to South Sudan this week that the country has seen serious human rights violations. The U.N. report said that gross violations of human rights

'Forces on both sides have shown total disregard for the most fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.'

Michelle Kagari
Amnesty International deputy director for Africa

and international humanitarian law have been committed.

Much of the violence has been ethnic in nature and carried out by troops loyal to President Salva Kiir, an ethnic Dinka, and rebels loyal to former Vice President Riek Machar, an ethnic Nuer. The two men

are scheduled to meet for face-to-face talks in Ethiopia on Friday. If the meeting happens, it would represent the biggest breakthrough since fighting broke out in December.

The U.N. report documents the killings of "at least 300 Nuer men" in a neighborhood of the capital, Juba, the day after the violence broke out. The report said that bodies from many attacks were taken to unknown disposal sites.

The U.N. representative in South Sudan, Hilde F. Johnson, said accountability for the crimes is critical to ending the legacy of impunity in South Sudan and preventing similar atrocities in the future.

The Amnesty report documents the rapes of children and the shooting deaths of the elderly while lying in hospital beds. In one horrific act of violence, the report documents the rape of a 10-year-old girl by 10 men.

"Forces on both sides have shown total disregard for the most fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law," said Michelle Kagari, Amnesty's deputy director for Africa. "Those up and down the chain of command on both sides of the conflict who are responsible for perpetrating, ordering or acquiescing to such grave abuses, some which constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, must be held accountable."

WORLD

Nigerians: Security slow to respond before attack

The Associated Press

BAUCHI, Nigeria — Residents of a Nigerian town faulted security forces for responding slowly to the presence of Boko Haram fighters who later attacked, killing many people.

At least 50 bodies have been recovered from the debris of burned shops after the town's main market was attacked Monday by the Islamic militants.

Gamboru resident Abuwar Masta said the bodies were found after the market

reopened on Wednesday. Health workers, volunteers and traders searched for missing people. He said most of the bodies were burned beyond recognition.

Masta and other traders said the attack could have been averted if security forces had responded quickly to an alarm raised by villagers who said they had seen insurgents camping in the bushes near Gamboru.

Boko Haram last month kidnapped more than 300 girls from a school.

Yemen: Al-Qaida stronghold seized

By AHMED AL-HAJ

The Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — Yemeni armed forces on Thursday swept al-Qaida fighters out of a district in the country's south, one of the main goals of the major offensive waged by the military the past two weeks, the Defense Ministry said, amid fears of retaliatory attacks that officials said prompted the closure of the U.S. embassy in the capital as a precaution.

The ministry said dozens of suspected militants have been killed and captured in the past week as troops and allied tribal fighters have seized a string of al-Qaida-held areas along a 60-mile stretch of high-

way snaking through the rugged desert mountains of the south, starting from the Mahfad region.

On Thursday, they took over militant positions in the district of Azzan, seizing control of the district center, the ministry said.

Troops seized CDs and other documents that details plots by al-Qaida to carry out attacks in several Yemeni provinces, it said.

Security officials said some militants fled into nearby mountains, and that troops were clashing with them sporadically. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press.

Pakistan frees American identified as FBI agent

By ADIL JAWAD

The Associated Press

KARACHI, Pakistan — Pakistan released an FBI agent on bail Thursday after three days in custody, officials said, a move that is likely to prevent the situation from escalating into a diplomatic spat.

The American man was detained after airport authorities found him carrying ammunition and three knives Monday as he was about to board a flight for the Pakistani capital, Islamabad.

The arrest threatened to open a new chapter in troubled relations between Pakistan and the U.S., which have been uneasy allies since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The relatively fast release, if confirmed, suggested efforts to defuse any tensions.

A law enforcement official in the U.S. has said the man was an FBI agent and said he was in Pakistan as part of a multi-agency, anti-corruption program. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the diplomatic sensitivities of the case, said the agent appeared to have made a mistake and didn't mean to carry bullets aboard the plane.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki confirmed the detention Wednesday and said the U.S. was coordinating with Pakistani authorities to resolve the matter. She did not identify the man.

A Pakistani court directed the man to

submit a surety bond of 1 million rupees (\$9,800) for his bail, police officer Rao Anwar said. The American arrived in Karachi on May 1 and was detained after officials found him with the ammunition, knives and electronic devices that were being examined.

He said the release came a day after police completed the investigation and submitted the report to the court.

Other police officials said investigators were under immense pressure from the Interior Ministry and other government officials to release the American, so the report was rushed. They found he had no criminal intention in carrying the bullets during domestic air travel, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity in exchange for release of the details.

Washington needs Pakistan's help fighting al-Qaida and stabilizing neighboring Afghanistan as NATO uses Pakistani roads to supply its troops. However, relations have strained over a series of incidents. CIA contractor Raymond Davis shot and killed two Pakistani men in Lahore in January 2011. The U.S. unilaterally killed Osama bin Laden in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad in May 2011, and American forces accidentally killed 24 Pakistani troops along the Afghan border the same year. U.S. drones strikes in the country also have angered Pakistanis.

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| Friday's US temperatures | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|--------|----------------|----|----|--------|----------------------|----|----|--------|---------------|----|----|--------|-----------------|----|----|--------|------------------|----|----|--------|
| City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | Chattanooga | 82 | 63 | City | Fort Wayne | 74 | 65 | Rain | Louisville | 77 | 67 | Rain | Pocatello | 57 | 42 | Rain | Siox City | 69 | 44 | PClody |
| Abilene, Tex | 88 | 57 | PClody | Cheyenne | 60 | 33 | City | Fresno | 78 | 58 | PClody | Lubbock | 84 | 52 | City | Portland, Maine | 58 | 42 | City | Siox Falls | 64 | 42 | PClody |
| Albany, N.Y. | 74 | 61 | City | Chicago | 74 | 61 | City | Grand Rapids | 72 | 60 | City | Madison | 67 | 61 | City | Portland, Ore | 58 | 42 | City | Spokane | 58 | 44 | Rain |
| Albuquerque | 76 | 45 | City | Cincinnati | 75 | 63 | Rain | Grand Junction | 69 | 35 | City | Madison | 67 | 61 | City | Pueblo | 63 | 47 | City | Spokane | 58 | 44 | Rain |
| Albany, N.Y. | 76 | 45 | City | Cleveland | 76 | 60 | Rain | Grand Rapids | 72 | 65 | Rain | Medford | 64 | 48 | Rain | San Francisco | 74 | 39 | PClody | Springfield, Ill | 74 | 65 | City |
| Albany, N.Y. | 76 | 45 | City | Columbia, S.C. | 82 | 63 | PClody | Green Bay | 66 | 62 | City | Midland-Odesa | 85 | 76 | City | San Jose | 57 | 42 | PClody | Springfield, Mo | 77 | 57 | City |
| Amarillo | 83 | 47 | City | Columbia, S.C. | 82 | 63 | PClody | Green Bay | 66 | 62 | City | Miami Beach | 85 | 76 | City | San Jose | 57 | 42 | PClody | Springfield, Mo | 77 | 57 | City |
| Anchorage | 59 | 44 | PClody | Columbus, Ga. | 96 | 63 | City | Greensboro, N.C. | 88 | 60 | PClody | Midland-Odesa | 85 | 76 | City | San Jose | 57 | 42 | PClody | Tallahassee | 89 | 62 | City |
| Anchorage | 59 | 44 | PClody | Columbus, Ohio | 77 | 61 | City | Hamburg | 78 | 68 | City | Midland-Odesa | 85 | 76 | City | San Jose | 57 | 42 | PClody | Tallahassee | 89 | 62 | City |
| Atlanta | 83 | 64 | City | Concord, N.H. | 63 | 43 | City | Hartford Springfield | 64 | 48 | City | Missoula | 67 | 51 | City | Shawnee | 87 | 68 | PClody | Toledo | 72 | 63 | Rain |
| Atlantic City | 70 | 56 | City | Corpus Christi | 86 | 63 | City | Helena | 59 | 41 | Rain | Missoula | 67 | 51 | City | Shawnee | 87 | 68 | PClody | Toledo | 72 | 63 | Rain |
| Austin | 80 | 61 | City | Dallas | 77 | 61 | City | Honolulu | 73 | 59 | City | Minneapolis | 68 | 67 | City | Shawnee | 87 | 68 | PClody | Toledo | 72 | 63 | Rain |
| Baltimore | 78 | 61 | City | Dayton | 74 | 63 | Rain | Houston | 84 | 73 | City | Montgomery | 85 | 65 | City | Shawnee | 87 | 68 | PClody | Toledo | 72 | 63 | Rain |
| Batle Rouge | 84 | 72 | Rain | Daytona Beach | 85 | 69 | PClody | Huntsville | 79 | 65 | Rain | Nashville | 81 | 65 | Rain | St Louis | 81 | 65 | Rain | Tulsa | 78 | 62 | PClody |
| Biloxi | 82 | 64 | City | Daytona Beach | 85 | 69 | PClody | Huntsville | 79 | 65 | Rain | Nashville | 81 | 65 | Rain | St Louis | 81 | 65 | Rain | Tulsa | 78 | 62 | PClody |
| Birmingham | 80 | 65 | City | Des Moines | 68 | 52 | PClody | Jackson, Miss. | 79 | 68 | Rain | New York City | 63 | 53 | City | St Thomas | 84 | 74 | Rain | Washington | 81 | 63 | PClody |
| Bismarck | 64 | 31 | City | Detroit | 74 | 62 | Rain | Jacksonville | 88 | 65 | PClody | Newark | 64 | 53 | City | Salem, Ore | 59 | 48 | Rain | W. Palm Beach | 89 | 76 | City |
| Boston | 61 | 48 | City | El Paso | 84 | 56 | City | Jefferson City | 71 | 51 | PClody | Newark | 64 | 53 | City | Salt Lake City | 79 | 64 | City | Wichita | 75 | 60 | PClody |
| Boston | 61 | 48 | City | El Paso | 84 | 56 | City | Kansas City | 71 | 51 | PClody | New Orleans | 70 | 36 | City | San Antonio | 91 | 54 | PClody | Wichita Falls | 77 | 60 | PClody |
| Brownsville | 90 | 75 | City | Elkville | 81 | 64 | City | Kansas City | 71 | 51 | PClody | New Orleans | 70 | 36 | City | San Antonio | 91 | 54 | PClody | Wichita Falls | 77 | 60 | PClody |
| Brownsville | 90 | 75 | City | Erie | 78 | 60 | Rain | Knoxville | 82 | 62 | City | Omaha | 70 | 46 | PClody | San Diego | 70 | 60 | PClody | Wilmington, Del. | 82 | 58 | City |
| Buffalo | 77 | 60 | Rain | Eugene | 60 | 43 | City | Lake Charles | 82 | 72 | Rain | Orlando | 91 | 68 | PClody | San Francisco | 67 | 52 | City | Yakima | 63 | 44 | City |
| Burlington, Vt. | 86 | 64 | City | Fairbanks | 58 | 35 | City | Lake Charles | 82 | 72 | Rain | Orlando | 91 | 68 | PClody | San Francisco | 67 | 52 | City | Yakima | 63 | 44 | City |
| Caroline, Maine | 63 | 30 | City | Fairbanks | 58 | 35 | City | Lake Vegas | 87 | 64 | City | Pendleton | 62 | 48 | City | San Jose | 57 | | | | | | |
| Casper | 61 | 32 | City | Fargo | 62 | 41 | PClody | Lexington | 77 | 63 | Rain | Peoria | 72 | 62 | City | St Ste Marie | 63 | 49 | Rain | | | | |
| Charleston, S.C. | 88 | 63 | PClody | Flapjack | 71 | 47 | City | Lincoln | 74 | 64 | PClody | Phoenix | 73 | 58 | City | Savannah | 67 | 44 | PClody | | | | |
| Charleston, S.C. | 88 | 63 | PClody | Flint | 74 | 64 | Rain | Little Rock | 83 | 67 | City | Phoenix | 91 | 64 | City | Seattle | 57 | 49 | Rain | | | | |
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| National temperature extremes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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FAITH



The lure of faith



PHOTOS BY PHIL CARLSON, THE QUINCY (ILL.) HERALD-WHIG/AP

Tom East holds one of his Christian Fishermen crankbait lures in the basement workshop of his home in Coatsburg, Ill. East turned his love of fishing into a business that also benefits faith-based organizations.

Ill. man combines love of fishing with Christian beliefs and charity

By DEBORAH GERTZ HUSAR
The Quincy (Ill.) Herald-Whig

COATSBURG, Ill. — Tom East believes faith, family and fishing can be a “reel” catchy combination.

The Coatsburg man turned a lifelong love of fishing into a sideline business donating part of its proceeds to faith-based organizations.

“We’re a business, but it’s more of a mission,” East said.

Listening to an inner voice led East to try making his first fishing lure back in 2010.

It turned out “ugly and heavy,” and he kept it not only as a reminder of his first in crafting lures but as a way to teach a valuable lesson to his three daughters.

“When life tells you to give up, you keep pushing on,” East said.

Had he given up, he said, “We never would have impacted people in God’s name, never had an opportunity to give back to anywhere because we quit.”

Trial and error led to making better

lures, which he showed off to co-workers at Knapheide. When they wanted to buy the lures, “I had to come up with a new idea of how to go a little faster,” East said.

A basement room of a former grade school turned into his family home “is where the magic happens,” East said.

He still crafts wooden lures, cutting out the basic shape, sanding, priming, painting, adding the details and a clear coat finish.

He also makes plastic lures, working with a two-piece resin mold taken from his wooden lures. Purchased eyes and spoons help finish the custom bass and rooster lures, and “when we’re all done, we tie a marabou on the tail,” East said.

“They may resemble other people’s lures, but they are not copied. They are our own original,” he said.

The most fun in the process is the painting, turning the basic lures into underwater art sporting everything from camouflage

to colors from area school districts.

“The way it looks is for the fisherman. Everything else is designed for the fish,” East said. “The way these are cut will make the water turn and vibrate. That’s what the fish like. With this thing rattling, they’re going to chase it.”

Fishing has been a huge part of East’s life since childhood, when the catch helped feed the family.

“My grandfather taught my dad. My dad taught me and my brothers. Now we’re teaching the girls,” East said. “This is a way to make a connection to the past and a way to make a connection to your future.”

It’s not just about catching fish. It’s bonding time, spent in conversation in the boat, and it’s a way to emphasize his faith.

Talking with Tom Robbins, his pastor at Faith Baptist Church and frequent fishing partner, sent the business in a new direction, “giving it back to God where it belongs,” East said.

Originally known as Tommy’s Hand Made Lures, the business now is known as Christian Fisherman, with a symbol tying together a fishing hook and a cross and an emphasis on a Scripture, Mark 1:17, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will

make you become fishers of men.’”

He’s willing to spread the message with church groups and Scout troops, working with young people to foster both faith and an interest in fishing.

East and his family also create wordless Bible necklaces, and they sell T-shirts and bracelets.

East donates 10 percent of the business proceeds to Christian charities, food banks and faith-based organizations.

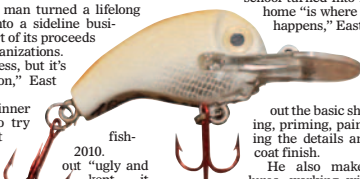
His very first profits went to buy cans of tuna donated to the Community For Christ Assistance Center in Camp Point.

And his faith helped promote the business.

“I’m always taking stuff to show the pastor,” East said. “Some guys say ‘Can I see those? I can sell those.’ He manages GameMasters fishing department. It’s still new out there, but the stuff’s moving.”

Beyond GameMasters, his lures are available at Wiemelt Bait and Tackle in Quincy. T-shirts are available at the Mustard Seed. And all the items are available through East and his website, tommyslures.webs.com.

“Everything we do has been prayed over,” he said. “It might not make a difference to somebody else, but it does to me.”



WORLD

Rebel bombing of Syrian hotel kills at least 14

By BARBARA SURK
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — A rebel-claimed bombing Thursday in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo leveled a once-luxurious hotel near the ancient Citadel that government troops used as a military base, causing multiple casualties, activists and militants said.

Syrian state television said the explosion struck the Carlton Hotel in a government-held area on the edge of a contested neighborhood in the old part of Aleppo.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which maintains a network of activists on the ground, said at least 14 soldiers were killed in the blast. The Islamic Front — Syria's biggest rebel alliance, which claimed the attack — claimed to have killed 50 soldiers. Both groups did not say how they know how many soldiers died, and the claims could not be independently verified.

In a live broadcast from the site of the blast, the station's correspondent in Aleppo stood on a huge pile of rubble with twisted metal and palm trees sticking out, saying that the army had been using the building as a base and soldiers were positioned there at the time of the explosion. In the broadcast, Syrian TV did not mention casualties but said the rebels blew up the building by tunneling underneath and planting explosives.

"They use tunnels like rats because they cannot face the Syrian Arab Army," the correspondent said, adding that the explosion felt like an earthquake to those around Aleppo.

The attack was the second carried out by the Islamic Front against the Carlton. The first, allegedly carried out also through explosives-packed tunnels, caused a partial collapse of the building in February. The Front, an alliance of several Islamic groups fighting to topple President Bashar Assad, appears to favor this technique and has used it to carry out deadly attacks

against government forces in Aleppo and Idlib provinces.

Thursday's attack was a blow to Assad's government in the north as his troops prepare to regain control of the central city of Homs following last week's cease-fire agreement after a fierce, two-year battle with the rebels trying to oust him.

Rebels were completing their withdrawal from Homs on Thursday, a day after hundreds of fighters evacuated from the city under the cease-fire deal.

No such agreement appears to be in sight in Aleppo, Syria's largest city and former commercial hub. The city has been carved

'They use tunnels like rats because they cannot face the Syrian Arab Army.'

Syrian TV correspondent

up into opposition- and government-held areas since the rebels launched an offensive there in mid-2012, capturing territory along Syria's northern border with Turkey.

In recent months, government aircraft relentlessly have bombed rebel-held areas of the city and the opposition fighters have hit back, firing mortars into government-held areas. The rebels also have detonated car bombs in residential areas, killing dozens of people.

The Islamic Front posted a statement on its official Twitter account Thursday saying that its "fighters this morning leveled the Carlton Hotel barracks in Old Aleppo and a number of buildings near it, killing 50 soldiers."

The Observatory said Islamic Front fighters planted a huge amount of explosives in a tunnel they dug below the hotel and detonated it remotely. It said the hotel was completely destroyed in the blast and at least 14 government soldiers were killed in the blast.

The Syrian government does not publicize its casualties in the civil war.



Typhoon survivors clean up a village in Tacloban city, Leyte province, in central Philippines, on Feb. 13. There are signs of progress since the storm devastated the Philippines on Nov. 8, but much work remains.

6 months after typhoon, signs of progress in the Philippines

By TERESA CERJOJANO
The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Six months after the strongest typhoon to hit land killed his mother and tore down much of their house in the eastern Philippines, Sofronio Cervantes wants to return home — if only he can scrape together the money to rebuild his life once he gets there.

Like thousands of others, the 38-year-old farmer fled the destruction wrought by Typhoon Haiyan to Manila, the capital. But after a fruitless search for work and surviving on the charity of his wife's relatives, Cervantes says it is now time to go back to his village, where his father lives in what remains of their house — a tarpaulin roof strung between two broken walls.

"I want to restart our lives there," he said while visiting the Social Welfare Department, where he managed to get a cash handout of 2,800 pesos, or \$60, to cover the bus fare for his wife, 1-year-old son and himself back to his home province of Leyte. "What will I do here? It is better for us to go home."

There are signs of progress since the monster storm slammed into the Philippines on Nov. 8, leaving more than 7,300 dead or missing and flattening hundreds of thousands of homes and other structures. Many survivors have started rebuilding and debris is slowly being cleaned up and carted away.

Enormous work remains. As of the end of April, more than 2 million people were living without adequate shelter, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said. Access to water and sanitation also remains a challenge.

"We know that recovery will be a long road," said Marcel Fortier, of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "I can tell you based on our experience, after three years, there would still be a lot of needs that will not be covered."

Recovery efforts have been stymied by government bureaucracy, said Panfilo Lacson, a former senator who heads the government's rehabilitation team.

The rebuilding master plan that includes input from local government officials has yet to be

reviewed by Cabinet officials and presented to President Benigno Aquino III for approval, he said. Lacson also said he doesn't have full authority to make decisions, implement plans and disburse funds, unlike the official put in charge of rebuilding after the massive 2004 earthquake and tsunami in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

"I am really frustrated," Lacson said. "It is difficult to coordinate but not have the implementing authority."

He was relieved, however, that there had been no epidemics or breakdown in law in order in the disaster zone, and noted that it took eight years for areas hit by Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. to fully recover.

Reconstruction from the Haiyan disaster will cost 104 billion pesos, or \$2.35 billion, the government estimates.

So far, \$763 million in foreign aid has been pledged for rebuilding, and the government has received about half of that. Those funds are apart from the millions of dollars in food and other emergency aid that was distributed directly by aid groups shortly after the typhoon.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
JOSEPH FINDER
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SHOWTIME/MCT

Josh Hartnett loves stepping into new challenges. His latest is his role as Ethan Chandler in the Showtime series "Penny Dreadful." Hartnett plays an American sharpshooter who finds himself adrift in Victorian London's seamy side. "He seems to be a man with a death wish," Hartnett says about his character. "And what happens in this series, no matter how dark, how messed up, it gives him reason to live."

Hartnett buys into TV with 'Penny Dreadful'

By LYNN ELBER
The Associated Press

A big reason film actors are drawn to TV is that it offers the sort of character-driven projects found less and less in a movie world tilted toward blockbusters.

That's partly why Josh Hartnett jumped into "Penny Dreadful," an eight-part series debuting May 11 on Showtime and May 17 on AFN-Spectrum. He plays a troubled American, a gun for hire, ensnared by Victorian London's dark side in the horror drama-cum-psychological study.

Hartnett also appreciated the guarantee that the project would be marketed and presented to an audience, something he's become painfully aware isn't always the case with independent films.

"I've had worthy films not get a correct release, and have people come up to me later and say how much they enjoyed the film," seen after the fact online or on DVD, he said. "It's gratifying to know that people go back and see stuff," he said. "But it would be more gratifying to be part of the cultural dialogue and [know] that it [a project] had an impact when it was released."

Hartnett was in his early 20s when he made a splash in 2001 with two major Hollywood movies, "Pearl Harbor" and "Black Hawk Down," part of a varied slate for him that year that included "O," a modern take on "Othello."

"It's really exciting to have a big movie release," said Hartnett. "Everybody should be so lucky to have that experience. You feel like the whole world's focused on you for a little while, and it's overwhelming."

The actor is seeking other rewards now, those he said that have "less to do with climbing the Hollywood ladder" and more to do with personal and professional growth. "I thought if you're doing interesting work, interesting people will want to work with you. So far, I've been lucky enough to have that happen," said Hartnett, who offers carefully chosen words with a slow, low-pitched cadence.

But Hartnett's profile was reduced as some films suffered spotty or delayed releases. His starring role in "Penny Dreadful" has put him squarely back in the publicity spotlight and, he says, has led to some media confusion. "The narrative that's been created over the last couple months is

Movies featuring Hartnett



'Pearl Harbor'
2001

Hartnett played Capt. Danny Walker in this World War II drama.



'Black Hawk Down'
2001

Ridley Scott directed Hartnett in this film about the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu.



'30 Days of Night'
2007

Hartnett plays a sheriff in a small town in Alaska threatened by vampires.

that I disappeared, and I was some hermit for the last few years and joined a cult or something," he said. "It's just crazy... I was doing work I thought was worthy."

But he's fine with the renewed attention. "Being 35 and not 18, I'm less susceptible to the negative aspects" — given the satisfactions of working on "Penny Dreadful."

The foremost attraction for Hartnett was working with creator-executive producer John Logan, a Tony Award-winner for "Red" and an Oscar-nominated screenwriter whose credits include "Gladiator," "Hugo" and "Skyfall," and executive producer Sam Mendes, the "American Beauty" Oscar-winning director.

The series they have wrought is an undeniable creepfest. Its title is drawn from the nickname for cheap, 19th-century publications that offered serialized tales of violence, death and general sensationalism.

Showtime's version finds explorer Sir Malcolm Murray (Timothy Dalton) and the mysterious Vanessa Ives (Eva Green) in the hunt for a monstrous killer. They recruit Hartnett's sharpshooter, Ethan Chandler, a man with a shrouded past, and Dr. Victor Frankenstein (Harry Treadaway).

Like the actor who plays him, Ethan faces a difficult but potentially rewarding journey — albeit with much gore added. "He seems to be a man with a death wish. And what happens in this series, no matter how dark, how messed up, it gives him reason to live," Hartnett said.

Seven-part Ken Burns documentary on the Roosevelts to kick off PBS season

From wire reports

PBS said Thursday its fall season will open with a binge-viewing opportunity: a seven-part Ken Burns documentary on the Roosevelt political dynasty.

"The Roosevelts: An Intimate History," will air as two-hour episodes for seven nights beginning Sept. 14. Each episode will be repeated nightly and the show will be widely available for post-air online viewing, said Beth Hoppe, PBS chief programming executive.

"I think it's the best thing Ken's done since 'The Civil War,'" Hoppe said. "He thinks it might be the best thing he's ever done."

"The viewer experience is changing and we're trying to dish

this up as an epic binge," Hoppe said of the series about U.S. presidents and cousins Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt and FDR's wife, Eleanor.

The Burns family itself will be well-represented on public TV's schedule, with brother Ric Burns' "The Pilgrims" airing Nov. 25, Thanksgiving week. The "American Experience" film will examine what compelled English men and women to voyage to a new land in 1620.

PBS, whose average household rating for the season to date puts it at No. 7 among all broadcast and cable channels, won't have drama ratings champ "Downton Abbey" back on until January. But there's a full slate of fall alternatives.

Among them is "Death Comes to Pemberley," based on novelist P.D. James' sequel to Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" and starring Matthew Rhys ("The Americans") and Anna Maxwell Martin. It airs Oct. 26 and Nov. 2.

Bill Nighy will return as British spy Johnny Worrick, seen in 2011's "Page Eight," in two new stories.

'Enlisted' axed by Fox

Fox's "Dads," which came under fire for what critics and others saw as offensive humor, has been canceled, along with two other freshman comedies, "Enlisted" and "Surviving Jack."

"Enlisted," about three brothers

on an Army base in Florida, also encountered controversy. Some military veterans maintained its early episodes lacked authenticity.

Midseason entry "Surviving Jack" starred Christopher Meloni as an ex-military man who struggles with being a good parent to his kids.

Other news

■ **Terry Crews** is going in for Cedric The Entertainer as new host of "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire." Crews, an actor, former NFL player and Old Spice pitchman, will join the weekday game show starting this fall, according to its studio, Disney-ABC Domes-

tic Television.

■ **Ken Follett** has signed on for three new novels, including a sequel to his million-selling "The Pillars of Earth." Follett has an agreement with the Berkeley/LAL Publishing Group division of Penguin Group (USA). The division's president, Leslie Gelbman, announced the deal Wednesday.

■ **Publisher Viking** announced Thursday that the Grammy-winning musician's novel, titled "Herbie Hancock: Possibilities," has a release date of Oct. 28. The memoir will be co-written by Lisa Dickey.

■ **Kristin Cavallari** and **Jay Cutler** announced a son Wednesday named Jaxon Wyatt, her publicist confirms.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Sorority faces discipline for city park incident

WA PULLMAN — Washington State University officials plan to discipline a sorority for an incident last weekend in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, that involved students urinating in a city park in front of families.

The Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority will be charged with violations of the university's standards of conduct as a result of Saturday's incident, which occurred during a sorority-sponsored event.

The university received complaints from a Coeur d'Alene resident who reported that drunk students were observed exiting a chartered bus and urinating in public in the park.

If students are found responsible, they face a variety of punishments ranging from warnings to expulsion.

Man accused of killing wife with laced Kool-Aid

MO EMINENCE — A southeast Missouri man is charged with first-degree murder after investigators allege he killed his wife by giving her Kool-Aid laced with prescription drugs.

KYTV-TV reported Jason McClurg, 35, of Winona, is accused of poisoning Stephanie McClurg, 32, on Sunday after unsuccessfully trying to do the same a day earlier.

A probable cause statement said McClurg told an unidentified person he had mixed Kool-Aid with a large number of pills on Saturday because he wanted to "get rid of" his wife, but it didn't work.

A second person told police McClurg claimed to have thrown a pill capsule by the couch to make it look like she had committed suicide.

He was being held without bond in Shannon County Jail.

Man is rescued after jump at Niagara Falls

NY BUFFALO — A suicidal man spent six hours near the brink of Niagara Falls before jumping into the water in front of the rescuers who had been trying to coax him to safety, authorities said Wednesday.

Firefighters and police were able to pull him from the Niagara River about 15 yards from the precipice, Lt. Patrick Moriarty, of the New York State Park Police, said.

Moriarty said the 33-year-old man, who was from Long Island, was taken to a Niagara Falls hospital for evaluation.

The incident began shortly before 1 a.m. Tuesday when the man called 911 and told dispatchers he planned to kill himself.

Moriarty spoke with the man for hours but he jumped around 7 a.m. Apparently changing his mind, he quickly began swimming toward shore, allowing police and firefighters to pull him out.

Shaking violently from the cold, the man said nothing as he was taken to an ambulance.

THE CENSUS

77

The estimated age of a basketball used in the first Olympic gold medal basketball game that a Kansas sports promoter hopes to sell. The undersized, deflated ball that's stitched together like a volleyball has been in Canada since a player's wife slipped it under a blanket after the championship game in Berlin in August 1936. The U.S. team took the gold with a 19-8 win over Canada, but a Canadian player, Jimmy Stewart, wound up with the game ball. Now, Overland Park, Kan., promoter Keith Zimmerman, right, is trying to sell the ball on behalf of Stewart's son. He expects it to net "six figures" when it is auctioned off July 12.



TYSON TRISH, THE RECORD OF BERGEN COUNTY (N.J.)/AP

Bagpipes tribute

Passaic County Sheriff's Capt. Scott Smith plays the bagpipes with other members of the Passaic County and Port Authority Pipes and Drums Corps during the 15th annual Blue Mass honoring deceased law enforcement officers, celebrated at St. Gerard Majella Church in Paterson, N.J., on Tuesday.

Tree-trimmers grind up more than limbs

CA OAKLAND — Federal and state wildlife officials are investigating a tree-trimming operation in Oakland that witnesses say sent baby birds into a wood chipper, a newspaper reported.

Horrified onlookers called police on Saturday as crews ground up black-crowned night heron bird chicks that were nesting in trees being trimmed in the downtown area, the San Francisco Chronicle reported Tuesday.

"It was awful," said Lisa Owens Viani, director of Raptors Are The Solution, who was among the first on the scene. "It's especially appalling because these birds are so vulnerable and such a valuable part of the ecosystem."

Police stopped the work, and Viani and others were able to rescue five chicks, according to the Chronicle.

Joe Campos, a supervisor with Campos Tree Service, said the

crew was new and didn't know the baby birds were in there.

Police: Bank robber's note leads to arrest

OR BEND — A Bend police affidavit says a robber at the Home Federal Bank two weeks ago demanded money by giving the teller a note written on the back of part of a grocery receipt.

Police said the receipt contained the last four digits of a food stamp account, which led to a suspect's name and a phone number, and then a telephone service provider came up with coordinates of the phone's location — a Central Oregon campground.

The Bulletin newspaper reported that's where Bend police arrested Robert Short, 54, on theft and robbery charges.

Police said Short denied the charges, saying he never keeps receipts and would have thrown it in the trash, where anyone could have picked it up.

VA hospital agrees to allow Christmas carols

GA AUGUSTA — A private school in Augusta whose students were banned from singing some Christmas carols at a VA hospital said a new agreement will allow the songs to be sung during the upcoming holiday season.

Alleluia Community School administrators said they've been assured by Augusta's Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center that students will be able to sing their carols — including those with religious content — within the hospital.

In December, the hospital announced a stricter stance on its policy banning carolers from singing religious Christmas music in public patient areas. As a result, the students were prevented from singing songs such as "Silent Night" and "O Come All Ye Faithful."

The VA said in a statement that it welcomes the school carolers.

Man charged in deadly dispute over deer

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A 57-year-old New Brighton man is charged with murder after he allegedly killed his neighbor over a dispute about feeding deer.

Prosecutors charged Neal Curtis Zumberge on Wednesday with one count of second-degree murder and one count of attempted second-degree murder.

According to the criminal complaint, Zumberge opened fire on his neighbors Monday, hours after Zumberge's adult son was arrested for allegedly threatening them. The complaint said Zumberge's son had accused the neighbors of giving Zumberge Lyme disease because they feed deer.

The complaint said Zumberge shot at his neighbors multiple times. Todd Stevens, 46, was killed and Jennifer Damerow Cleven, 58, was wounded.

From wire reports

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OPINION

Remember the cruel, unusual death

By CHRISTINE M. FLOWERS

Let me, for a brief moment, put on my lawyer's hat. The Eighth Amendment barring cruel and unusual punishment is not a suggestion. It is a mandate carved in stone. We do not torture. We do not cause undue suffering, we do not stretch the bounds of humanity in the name of vengeance.

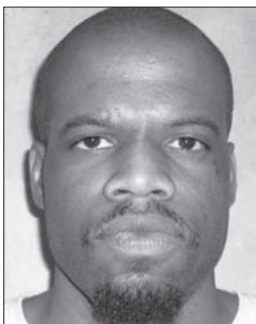
Now let me toss that hat to the side. The merits of the death penalty have been and will continue to be debated as long as justice is viewed through a personal prism. I believe that a society must impose the most draconian punishment for the most heinous crimes; otherwise, we do violence to the humanity of the victim. Others have a legitimate, heartfelt and sober belief that the government has no right to essentially "murder" one of its citizens.

This concern for process, which is important, shouldn't turn our focus away from the fundamental issue: Capital punishment is legal and constitutional; the cold-blooded murder of innocents is not.

News reports about the 43-minute execution of Clayton Lockett focused on him writhing in pain. That, of course, is horrible. Even a rabid animal elicits sympathy when it's in the final, foaming agony.

But few mentioned the reason Lockett was on that gurney in the first place with an IV strapped to his arm, the reason that his life was justifiably forfeit: Stephanie Neiman. Stephanie was shot by Lockett, who then stood by and watched his accomplice bury her alive. I'm guessing that her agony lasted a bit longer than 43 minutes.

It is obviously true that two wrongs do not make a right, but there is actually only one wrong here, and that is the cold-blooded extermination of an innocent woman. The botched



OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS/AP

The botched execution of Clayton Lockett has outraged death penalty opponents.

execution of her murderer is troubling from a procedural standpoint, but it should not blind us to the true tragedy in this case.

The Lockett case is a textbook study in how pro- and anti-death-penalty activists view the issue. Opponents of capital punishment ... feel that all life ... is sacred and that society has no right to destroy it even in those cases when this would balance the scales on an "eye for an eye" basis.

Those like me, who favor the death penalty as the most violent and despicable crimes, feel that we are bound by a social contract, and that when it's broken by a act

that falls below the lowest human threshold of decency the appropriate response is execution ...

What angered me the most in the discussion about the horrific nature of Lockett's execution was the blithe and utter refusal on the part of so many to acknowledge that his suffering was infinitely shorter and dead, let's be honest, more deserved, than that of his tragic victim. Forty minutes of pain, of an inability to breathe, of the sense of suffocation as the curtains to your earthly days close upon you is nothing compared with the fear in Stephanie Neiman's heart as she was shot and then pushed, alive, into a ditch. Imagine her pain when the dirt fell upon her head, clump by clump, and the light was forever shut out. Put yourself in her poor, battered body, stripped of dignity, of comfort, of the concerns of press types and governors and presidential press secretaries. Think of her final moments, and then consider whether half an hour of convulsions is as horrible.

That last paragraph might strike you as sadistic, or perhaps it is. But if the ability to empathize with an innocent, dying woman over the justified final reckoning of a murderer makes me a sadist, I will wear that label with no small pride.

The lawyer in me understands that we are not a nation of vigilantes, and that we must care that the people who are executed on our watch are guilty beyond any reasonable doubt. I'm in favor of whatever measures are necessary to make that happen. What I'm not prepared to do is weep crocodile tears for a man who was the victim of a botched execution, when the only reason he was so mightily inconvenienced was because he took an innocent life.

Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and a columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News.

Obama signals disinterest in foreign policy

growing.

Unfortunately, the vagaries of history don't always deliver what a president hopes for Iraq can't be the constant excuse for doing too little, too late on foreign policy issues that affect core U.S. interests. Yet the "no more Iraqs" mantra constantly colors the president's response on foreign policy from Syria to Ukraine.

In Manila, he scoffed at critics who said he should be assisting the Syrian opposition. Yet, in 2012, when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey and CIA director David Petraeus all proposed arming and organizing vetted, moderate Syrian opposition commanders, Obama nixed it.

That was the moment when such aid might have convinced the Syrian regime and its backers in Moscow that they had to negotiate a deal. Instead, the opposition was sent only nonlethal aid ...

Obama still doesn't seem to understand the message of weakness this sent to Bashar Assad and Vladimir Putin. And, in Manila, he was still dragging about the deal he struck with Moscow on eliminating Syria's chemical weapons, after reneging on a public pledge to strike Assad's military facilities if the Syrian leader ever used poison gas.

Never mind that 150,000 Syrians have died from conventional weapons, while Assad still retains some chemical weapons and allegedly used chlorine gas against civilians last week. Never mind that Assad looks likely to retain power in a good chunk of Syria, while the rest has become a base for Islamists and foreign jihadists who threaten the entire Mideast.

On Ukraine, the president also was bragging in Manila. "What we've done is mobilize the international community," he said.

"Russia has never been more isolated."

... There is more Washington could be doing to squeeze Putin, who doesn't yet believe he is isolated. Despite U.S. urging, Europe seems unwilling to risk its economic ties to Russia by backing stronger sanctions. NATO allies in Eastern Europe and the Baltics — looking at Obama's performance — worry that he won't stand up to Putin.

The Russian leader looks poised to disrupt May 25 elections in Ukraine, and take effective control of east Ukraine with secret forces and local proxies. Yet, Obama appears unwilling to unilaterally impose further sanctions, although many European analysts say that would pressure Germany and other countries to follow suit. Nor has he put forward a strong international energy policy that could convince Moscow that Europe can wean itself off Russian gas.

In Manila, Obama seemed not to recognize that China is watching U.S. actions elsewhere. So are America's Asian allies, who have to judge whether Washington will support them if Beijing makes aggressive moves.

They couldn't have been reassured as Obama made clear his main lesson from Iraq: America should shrink its aspirations abroad. "You hit singles, you hit doubles; every once in a while we may be able to hit a home run," the president said. He seemed to put forward a strategy of incrementalism, that he should rarely swing for the bleachers.

A kind of approach will convince Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran that Obama can be ignored, which will create new foreign policy headaches. It signals a president who isn't really interested in the foreign policy game.

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other state-side syndicates.

Taking a Pacific stand The (Memphis, Tenn.) Commercial Appeal

Slowly and gingerly, the United States is rebuilding its military presence in the Asian Pacific, and in two cases doing so at the invitation — though cloaked in diplomatic mumble talk — of the Philippines and Vietnam.

In 2012, the Philippines reopened to the U.S. Navy Subic Bay, a onetime major American naval base dating to the end of the Spanish-American War. That same year Vietnam reopened the huge and largely abandoned naval base at Cam Ranh Bay with the caveat that it was to be used by U.S. naval vessels.

The Navy pulled out of Cam Ranh Bay at the end of the Vietnam War and was more or less forced out of Subic Bay by the Philippine government in 1991.

Meanwhile, Japan, undoubtedly with tacit U.S. approval, is abandoning a ban that has stood since the end of World War II on the export of weapons and military materiel.

The related events are, as The Associated Press put it, part of an Obama administration policy of "reasserting the U.S. role as a Pacific power after a decade of war elsewhere." It is also a clear and growing reaction to the Chinese military buildup and "China's growing aggressiveness in asserting jurisdiction over disputed islands in the South China Sea.

The islands are largely uninhabited, but they give the possessor a claim on fishing rights and what are believed to be extensive oil and gas deposits. They are claimed not only by China but variously by Vietnam, the Philippines, South Korea, Japan and Malaysia.

Speaking Monday in Manila, where he signed a 10-year agreement providing U.S. access to Philippine military bases, President Barack Obama said, "Our goal is not to counter China. ... Our goal is to make sure international rules and norms are respected, and that includes in the area of international disputes."

Even so, if building up an arc of military treaties and basing-rights agreements around the South China Sea has the presumably unintended consequence of countering China, no one in Washington, Tokyo, Manila, Hanoi or Seoul will be the slightest bit dismayed.

A Benghazi smoking gun? Savannah (Ga.) Morning News

The Obama administration — and likely 2016 presidential contender Hillary Clinton — keep wishing the Benghazi mess will vanish.

Or, failing that, they hope to spin it as a fantasy of right-wing nut jobs.

But facts are stubborn things. There's hard to originate, but you never know when they'll catch up to you.

Like (last) week.

"A newly released email shows that White House officials sought to shape the way Susan E. Rice, then the ambassador to the United Nations, discussed the Middle East, in order to avoid criticism of the attack on the American diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, in 2012," one major news organization reported.

Nope. That's not a report from Fox News. It's from The New York Times.

The Times reported that an email dated Sept. 14, 2012, from Benjamin J. Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser, was sent to Rice ahead of her controversial



Ben Curtis/AP

South Africans protest in solidarity against the abduction of hundreds of schoolgirls in Nigeria by the Muslim extremist group Boko Haram during a march to the Nigerian Consulate in Johannesburg, South Africa, on May 8.

appearances on several Sunday morning news talk shows three days after the attacks that resulted in the slaying of four Americans, including J. Christopher Stevens, the ambassador to Libya.

The subject of the email was: "PREP CALL with Susan." The president's lieutenant gave directions to Rice on how to discuss the tensions boiling over in parts of the Middle East. Especially pertinent are two goals:

■ "To underscore that these protests are rooted in an Internet video, and not a broader failure of policy."

■ "To reinforce the President and Administration's strength and steadiness in dealing with difficult challenges."

That the White House would issue such orders — to Rice and others on Obama's team — is no huge shock.

The president was running for re-election; a big part of his platform was that America was winning the war on terrorism. So it was in his political interest to play up the possibility that a third-rate video sparked the violence that left four Americans murdered.

What is surprising is that these directions were typed and emailed. That made them subject to being ferreted out, thanks to one of the best tools available to uncover facts in our democracy — the Freedom of Information Act.

Governments can run from what they do. But thanks to this splendid, nonpartisan measure, they can't hide.

Military aid for Ukraine The Wall Street Journal

The battle for Ukraine is entering a dangerous new phase, as the Kiev government is finally making an attempt to regain control over its eastern cities from local thugs and Russian special forces. Is it too much to ask the U.S. to offer the military means to help Ukraine keep its own territory?

Vladimir Putin's campaign to destabilize and disrupt his neighbor is escalating as the May 25 date to elect a new Ukrainian government nears. The Russian strongman wants to block the vote, or disrupt it enough so he can call it illegitimate. His Russian-sponsored fighters moved this week from smaller towns in eastern Ukraine to the regional centers of Donetsk and Luhansk, taking key government installations.

The interim authorities in Kiev, which came into office after Moscow's crony and President Viktor Yanukovich fled this winter, have dithered. Acting President Oleksandr Turchynov on Wednesday said the Ukrainian state had no authority in the east, a demoralizing and questionable admission. Seizing an opening, Putin the next day told Kiev to withdraw from the east and sue for peace. The Ukrainians might as well send him the keys to the capital.

We're told the assault launched on Friday reflects a change in approach and a commitment to push back. The "assault" shown by Kiev in Crimea and in the east — which President Barack Obama praised again on Friday — has frustrated most Ukrainians and failed to stop the Russian advance. The interim government might have faced an uprising in Kiev over its defeatist approach.

Ukraine is desperately seeking Western military help, but so far the U.S. has refused. Earlier this week in Manila, Obama tetchily addressed his Ukraine policy, saying, "Well, what else should we be doing?" He offered another rhetorical question: "Do people actually think that somehow us sending some additional arms into Ukraine could potentially deter the Russian army?"

Well, who knows?

But Obama is so worried about upsetting Putin that he refused to send even night-vision goggles, offering 300,000 meals-ready-to-eat instead. The Ukrainians are battling to free themselves of Russian domination and build a European democracy. They deserve more than Spam in a can from America.

Nigeria's stolen girls The New York Times

Three weeks after their horrifying abduction in Nigeria, 276 of the more than 300 girls who were taken from a school by armed militants were still missing, possibly sold into slavery or married off. Nigerian security forces apparently do not know where the girls are and the country's president Goodluck Jonathan, has been shockingly slow and inept at addressing this monstrous crime.

On Tuesday, the United Nations Children's Fund said Boko Haram, the ruthless Islamist group that claimed responsibility for the kidnappings, abducted more young girls from their homes in the same part of the country in the northeast over the week-end. The group, whose name roughly means "Western education is a sin," has waged war against Nigeria for five years. Its goal is to destabilize and ultimately overthrow the government. The group's leader, Abubakar Shekau, said in a video released on Monday, "I abducted your girls. I will sell them in the market, by Allah."

This is not the first time Boko Haram has attacked students, killing young men and kidnapping young women.

But the kidnapping of so many young girls, ages 12 to 15, has triggered outrage and ignited a rare antigovernment protest movement in Nigeria.

On Sunday, after weeks of silence, Jonathan admitted that "this is a trying time for our country," and he said that Nigerians were justified in their anger against the government and applied for international help. The reaction of Jonathan's wife, Pa-

tience, was stunningly callous; according to state media, she told one of the protest leaders, "You are playing games. Don't use schoolchildren and women for demonstrations again."

Boko Haram's claim that it follows Islamic teachings is nonsense. A pre-eminent Islamic theological institute, Al-Azhar in Egypt, denounced the abductions, saying it "completely contradicts the teachings of Islam and its tolerant principles." Although Boko Haram is believed to number no more than a few hundred men, Nigerian security forces have been unable to defeat them.

The kidnappings occurred just as Jonathan is about to hold the World Economic Forum in Africa, with 6,000 troops deployed for security. That show of force may keep the delegates safe, but Nigeria's deeply troubled government cannot protect its people, attract investment and lead the country to its full potential if it cannot contain a virulent insurgency.

ACA premium increases Las Vegas Review-Journal

Hardly a day goes by without more depressing news about the effects of the Affordable Care Act, on both the state and national levels. And what's likely to come next has the potential to affect far more Nevadans than did the initial rollout back in October.

Thanks to a politically expedient delay by the Obama administration, the law's employer coverage mandate doesn't take effect until 2015. However, early plan renewals already are rolling in. As reported by the Review-Journal on Sunday, the numbers are astounding, with some businesses facing premium spikes ranging from 35 percent to a whopping 120 percent, according to local insurance brokers.

Businesses can't afford to swallow the massive increases, so employees will bear the burden — especially young, healthy males.

That's because Obamacare, by design, prohibits insurers from offering lower rates to healthier groups of people and caps on allowed premium increases. And it forces young enrollees. "It's like if there were no safe-driver discounts with State Farm," insurance broker Frank Nollimal, of Assurance Ltd., said. "Everybody has the same rate, whether you have three DUIs or you're a (nondrinking) churchgoing Mormon."

Or, sticking with the auto analogy, it's like making the owner of a Hyundai Sonata pay the same insurance price as the owner of Porsche 911 Cabriolet.

Of course, that assumes employers can keep their employer-based coverage.

Employees who lose their plans will, by law, be required to buy individual policies from Nevada Health Link — the disastrous performance of the state's exchange has been well-documented — or from a company that sells Obamacare-compliant policies, or pay the penalty tax for not doing so.

Las Vegas insurance broker William Wright told Robison the premium changes make it nearly impossible for many to avoid the risk of cancellation or nonrenewal this fall — more than three times the 25,000 enrollees who were affected in October, when Obamacare-compliant plans first rolled out.

All this amounts to a huge financial burden on businesses and employees, with Obamacare not only taking more money from employers and workers, but causing great harm to the economy. The Obama administration's efforts to delay the most costly and painful parts of the Affordable Care Act will result in even harsher political consequences for Democrats, who appear to have no way to pass the law without a single Republican vote.

When employees see massive wage losses due to equally massive premium increases, or when they lose their insurance or perhaps even their job, they'll certainly understand the importance of repealing the Obamacare mess. And the majority of the ballot will give them a chance to say as much.

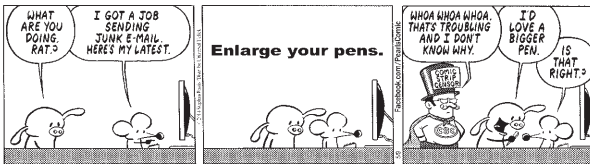
Frazz



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Pearls Before Swine



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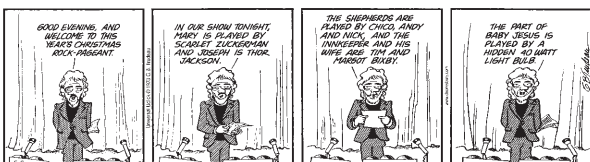
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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ACROSS

- Scratch
- Zodiac feline
- March VIP
- Altar constellation
- TV alien
- Fudd or Gantry
- Doughnut qty.
- Trial VIP
- I love, to Live
- Bloodhound's clue
- Sportscaster Albert
- Pair
- Cushiony
- Picks out of a lineup
- Trial VIP
- Apbom
- Big name in Chicago politics
- Trial VIPs

58 Genetic evidence

26 Take a whack at

DOWN

- My brother's keeper?
- Bakery lure
- Barbershop prop
- Fellows
- Votes in
- A man — words
- Transmitted
- Antiquated
- Mrs. Thurman
- Sun Yat —
- Illustrations
- Carbon compound
- Cap feature
- Posh
- Popeye's Olive
- Doctor's due
- Aachen article
- Fuss
- Sleepwear, for short
- Chic no more
- Savings-plan acronym
- Dalmatian's name, often
- Repress
- out of water
- Needed liniment
- Rose protector
- Striped equine
- Winter forecast
- Somewhere out there
- Greek consonant
- Broadway's Carliou
- The whole thing
- Waterfront org.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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5-9

CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's **Cryptoquip**: COMING FROM A CERTAIN AFRICAN COUNTRY, COULD YOU CALL THAT LONG-HAIRED GOAT AN ANGOLA ANGORA?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals L

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GOLF



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Jordan Spieth hits from a bunker on the 16th hole during practice Tuesday for The Players Championship in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Spieth's big year still lacking first victory

By DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Jordan Spieth is doing just about everything right this year, and it shows.

He is No. 5 in the Ryder Cup standings and No. 8 in the FedEx Cup. He was runner-up at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions and the Masters, and he at least put himself in the mix on the weekends at Pebble Beach, Torrey Pines and Riviera. He reached the quarterfinals in his debut at the Match Play Championship.

And his star power keeps rising, mainly as the 20-year-old Texan who seems to have a chance to be the "youngest" to do everything.

What gnaws at him is he is missing one thing.

"Plenty of chances to win, and it's eating at me a little that I haven't taken advantage of one of them yet," Spieth said Wednesday on the eve of The Players Championship. "But I keep putting myself in position, and I believe that it will go my way here soon."

Winning hasn't been easy for anyone this year, with only Bubba Watson, Patrick Reed and Jimmy Walker winning more than once. Only three players from the top 10 in the world ranking — Watson, Matt Kuchar and Jason Day — have won this year.

The Players Championship has never really favored anyone. That might be what defines this tournament, along with the Island green for the par-3 17th hole, and the fact the purse (\$10 million) is the richest in golf.

No one has ever won back-to-back at the TPC Sawgrass, and

that won't change this year because Tiger Woods is still recovering from back surgery.

Woods last played on March 9 at Doral, and since then, seven of the nine winners on the PGA Tour have been No. 90 or lower in the world ranking.

Spieth would love to get to No. 1 at some point in his career, even though his career is only 17 months old.

Remember, at this time a year ago, Spieth had just taken special temporary membership on the tour and was getting into tournaments on sponsor invitations.

He doesn't look at how far he has come in such a short time. He looks at how far he has to go.

"I'm just kind of sticking my feet in the water," said Spieth, the John Deere Classic winner last summer. "The Masters was a humbling experience, not being able to pull that off. So many of these guys have won major championships, so I know what they felt and how they overcame it and succeeded."

"I only hope to do that and get myself in positions to do that. I've set goals — I've set goals from when I was 15 years old. I still have yet to accomplish a couple of those and those could take two years and those could take 20 years."

"And in order for it to actually happen, I've got to keep my head down and keep moving forward and work as hard or harder than anybody."

For all he's done, Spieth has this much going against him: Only twice has someone won The Players Championship the first time competing on the Stadium Course. Hal Sutton won in 1983 and Craig Perks did it in 2002.

By DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla.

— As much time as Adam Scott spends away from the PGA Tour, this might have been a good week to take off.

By the mathematical wonder of the world ranking, Scott could have stayed in The Bahamas this week and still moved to No. 1 in the world ranking provided three other players had an ordinary week at The Players Championship.

"See you later," Scott said with a laugh when told of the scenario.

Scott would love to get to No. 1 for the first time in his career, though he's more interested in winning big tournaments. Besides, he had a chance at Bay Hill and the Masters to replace Tiger Woods atop the ranking and squandered both chances.

What adds to the interest on the TPC Sawgrass is Scott has company. Henrik Stenson, Masters champion Bubba Watson and Matt Kuchar each have a mathematical chance to reach No. 1 for the first time.

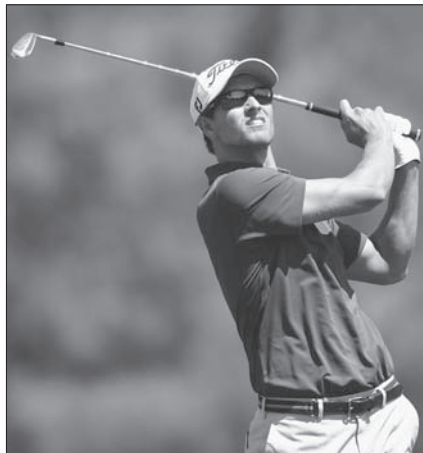
"I don't think I knew that," Kuchar said. "That title is a pretty impressive title. To be No. 1 in the world at anything is amazing. To have a chance to be No. 1 in the world of this game of golf, I think all of us that play have those dreams."

It's been made possible in part by Woods being on the sidelines. The Players Championship, which starts Thursday, is the second time he is unable to defend this year because of a balky back. Woods had surgery March 31 and still doesn't know when he might return.

Woods effectively has owned the No. 1 ranking for the better part of 15 years, his most recent reign dating to his victory last year in the Arnold Palmer Invitational. Other players have reached No. 1 with a caveat. Woods was going through a swing change in 2004 (though Vijay Singh helped his cause by winning nine times and a major), and he was going through another swing change and a divorce when he lost the No. 1 ranking from October 2010 to March 2013.

And now he's not even playing.

But the landscape is changing in golf. Woods has gone six years without a major and is hampered by injuries to his legs, arm and back in recent years. Stenson a year ago became the first player to win the FedEx Cup and Race to Dubai in the same season. Scott won the Masters and became a force in the majors.



JEFF SINEA, CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/MCT

Adam Scott could have skipped The Players Championship this week and still moved atop the world rankings, provided three other players vying for No. 1 had ordinary weeks.

"This guy has had as much of a 'No. 1' period as anyone," Geoff Ogilvy said as he walked onto the short-game area to see Scott stick 24 tees into the ground around the cup for a putting drill. "He contends every time he tees it up. He only plays the big tournaments. After two rounds, it feels like he has a chance in every tournament."

That sounds a little like Woods, minus the outrageous number of victories.

Even so, Ogilvy remembers the time when someone else got to No. 1 — whether it was Singh in 2004 or Lee Westwood in 2010 — and the murmurs were that Woods was busy changing his swing. Now?

"He seems to be playing better every week than Tiger," Ogilvy said about Scott. "Tiger won five times last year, but you go to the majors, Scott seems to be in contention with a chance to win more often than Tiger. If Tiger is your benchmark, he (Scott) has been a better player. Right now, whoever gets to No. 1 probably is. If Henrik wins a major and gets to No. 1, there can't be an argument."

Woods still has the nod over two years, the duration of how the ranking measures performances. In the 26 tournaments that

Woods and Scott have played, Woods has won five times (Scott has won twice) and has a 12-11-3 edge in how they finished. However, Scott has a 5-1-1 advantage in the seven majors they have played, winning one of them.

Stenson and Woods have played in 22 tournaments, with Woods having an 11-10-1 advantage (along with four wins to two for Stenson).

Here's the very least four contenders have to do for a chance at No. 1:

■ Scott has to finish in the top 16.

■ Stenson has to finish in the top six.

■ Watson has to finish second alone.

■ Kuchar has to win.

Scott has the most experience answering the questions, since it has been a mathematical possibility for more than two months. He couldn't hold a seven-shot lead at Bay Hill going into the weekend with a shot at No. 1. By now, as it was then, he cares more about winning.

"Look, I'm here to win golf tournaments," Scott said. "That's been the goal and from that you can get to No. 1 in the world if you win often enough."

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NFL DRAFT

Looking for his shot

Draft status uncertain for Missouri's Sam

By JIM LITKE
The Associated Press

Among the hundreds of players eligible for this year's NFL draft, one has come out and announced he's gay.

For all the dramas that will grab center stage each time a big name moves up or down the board, the fate of Michael Sam and whether he gets a real shot to play at the next level — could wind up trumping them all.

More than a few players and front-office execs have vowed they'd play alongside anyone if he made them a better team. This could be the weekend that claim is put to the test.

Sam is under-sized (6-foot-2, 252 pounds) by NFL standards, so the skills that won him acclaim as one of the top defenders in the top-tier Southeastern Conference won't carry as much weight as it otherwise might with the league's tough-to-impress scouts. The loyalty and respect he garnered among his Missouri teammates, who dutifully kept Sam's secret throughout last season, will count as a character reference but not much more.

Because while Sam was a factor on just about every down as a defensive end in college, predicting how he'll adapt to a role in the pros as a part-time, pass-rushing linebacker and special-teams player is a roll of the dice. What's certain, on the other hand, is that he'll have a media circus in tow wherever he lands.

"I would not hesitate to use a draft pick on him," said Bill Polian, a longtime NFL executive with Buffalo, Carolina and Indianapolis and current ESPN analyst. "He's a hard-nosed football player and there's always room for one of those."

Yet even while saying he thinks Sam's problem won't be with potential teammates — players won't have any issues with (his sexual orientation) at all — Polian suggested that by coming out, Sam may have left some front offices skittish.

"They may not see the distraction as worthwhile," he added.

At least one current general manager believes otherwise.

"I certainly think there is an element of courage that goes along with that," said Trent Baalke of the San Francisco 49ers, whose team interviewed Sam during his pro day workout at Missouri. "That's an issue that is continually being addressed, not only in the National Football League but in society. It needs to be addressed and I'm glad that the NFL is taking an active role from the commissioner on down."

'I would not hesitate to use a draft pick on him.'

Bill Polian
Former NFL GM

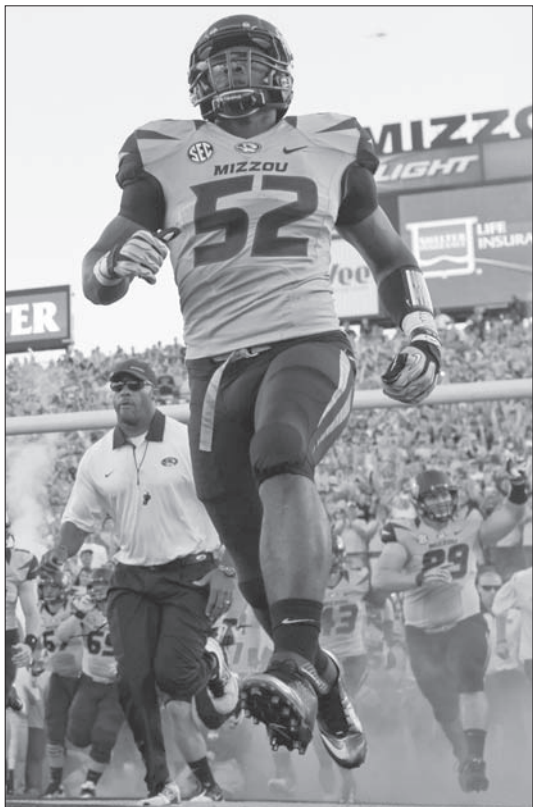
Roger Goodell greeted Sam's announcement by saying, "Good for him. He's proud of who he is and has the courage to say it. Now he wants to play football. But Sam's agents acknowledge they're as much in the dark about his draft prospects as everyone else. Well aware that it only takes one franchise or owner determined to make a point or drum up lots of free publicity — they've been told he could go anywhere from the end of the first round to being left off the board altogether."

The consensus among scouting services is that he'll be selected on the final day of the draft, if at all, somewhere between the fourth and sixth of the seven rounds. A few commentators on message boards have suggested it would be fitting if Sam was taken with the last pick in the last round, a dubious distinction known as "Mr. Irrelevant."

For his part, Sam has stayed out of the public eye, turning down requests for interviews since addressing his sexuality with both smarts and poise. After all, he's overcome long odds before.

Raised in a one-parent household, Sam lived in a car briefly as a youngster and with classmates several times during his high school career. He lost one brother to gun violence and two others are in prison. Just getting to the football field some days took the kind of guts that even the toughest NFL players have to admire.

All he's asking for is the chance to display that toughness one more time.



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

With openly gay player Michael Sam (52) about to be drafted into the NFL, several members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, including coach Marv Levy, linebacker Harry Carson and cornerback Michael Haynes, believe he will be readily accepted into the league and won't endure any discrimination.

Small: League no longer reliant solely on powerhouse programs

FROM BACK PAGE

Those sorts of oversights have prompted NFL decision makers to take their annual talent search to some unusual places.

"I was actually in Concordia this year and I wasn't the only GM, which really blew my mind when I saw a stack of business cards and saw another GM in there," Colts general manager Ryan Grigson said. "I was always taught by my old boss Charley Armer, I remember him saying years ago, 'Scout the player, not the school.'"

It's a sentiment that seems to resonate within a league no longer totally reliant on traditional powerhouses to find talent.

A year ago, Central Michigan offensive lineman Eric Fisher was selected No. 1 overall by Kansas City. This year, Buffalo linebacker Khalil Mack is projected to go in the top five, giving the once overlooked Mid-American

Conference the possibility of having top-five picks in back-to-back years.

The small-school talent pool is not drying up. Anything but.

■ Quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo has drawn comparisons to Dallas quarterback Tony Romo, a fellow Eastern Illinois alum, and isn't expected to last beyond the second round.

■ Haitian immigrant Pierre Desir, a 23-year-old cornerback, husband and father who worked in sewers between stints at two Division II schools, Washburn in Kansas and Lindenwood in Missouri, could go on the second day of the draft.

■ Short, powerful running back Terrance West ran for 2,509 yards and 41 touchdowns last season at Towson and appears to have a similar physique to Maurice Jones-Drew.

■ Offensive lineman Billy

Turner played on three straight FCS championship teams at North Dakota State.

■ Receiver Jeff Janis of Saginaw Valley State impressed scouts at the combine with a 4.42-second 40-yard dash after measuring in at 6-foot-3, 219 pounds.

■ Linebacker Johnny Millard of Cal Poly is attempting to follow in the footsteps of his father, Keith, a longtime NFL player.

Moore, a 6-5, 269-pound pass rusher who had 21 sacks over the past two seasons, and Webster, a 6-6, 252-pound defensive end who had 26 sacks in that span, are in the mix, too. Both were finalists for the Cliff Harris Award presented to the nation's best small-school defender.

None of these guys is surprised.

"I do feel like there is a lot of talent in Division II that does get overlooked because it's Division II, unless you stand out,"

Webster said. "You have to really stand out. If you don't, you get overlooked."

It's not that teams can't find the talent. It's just that sometimes it takes a lot more work to discover it beyond the traditional BCS schools.

Getting to some campuses can be complicated, and analyzing game tape isn't always easy. While BCS schools have plenty of tape available for scouts, often from multiple angles and against other potential draft prospects, that's not always the case in the FCS, Division II and III, the NAIA, or even all of the FBS leagues.

"That's where the real grinders on your staff find players. The lazy guys, they are not sitting there at a D-III school or another school that has poor facilities and you are sitting there with a VHS tape and an actual remote control where you hit rewind," Grigson said. "I've been there before

and then it rewinds all the way to the beginning of the tape and you've got to find where you were at before. It becomes a challenge, but the guys that work for me and work for the Indianapolis Colts have that type of drive to where they will sit there painstakingly through four, five tapes."

Eventually, they're able to determine whether a Moore or a Webster can cut it in the NFL. And more frequently, NFL decision-makers are giving guys like Moore and Webster the benefit of the doubt.

"Throughout the course of the season last year I have had over from 35-40 scouts from different teams come through," said Moore, who never played in front of a crowd bigger than 7,000. "I just stuck to the mindset that if you are good they will find you, and that is how I am fortunate enough to be here."

NHL

Scoreboard

Second round

(Best-of-7; x if necessary)
EASTERN CONFERENCE

Montreal 2, Boston 1
Montreal 4, Boston 3, 2OT
Thursday: at Montreal
Saturday: at Boston
x-Monday: at Montreal
x-Wednesday: at Boston
Pittsburgh 3, N.Y. Rangers 1
N.Y. Rangers 3, Pittsburgh 2, OT
Pittsburgh 3, N.Y. Rangers 0
Pittsburgh 2, N.Y. Rangers 0
Wednesday: Pittsburgh 4, N.Y. Rangers 3

Friday: at Pittsburgh
x-Sunday: at N.Y. Rangers
x-Tuesday, May 13: at Pittsburgh

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Chicago 2, Minnesota 1
Chicago 5, Minnesota 2
Chicago 4, Minnesota 1
Minnesota 4, Chicago 0
Friday: at Minnesota
Sunday: at Chicago
x-Tuesday: at Minnesota
x-Thursday: at Chicago
Los Angeles 3, Anaheim 0
Los Angeles 3, Anaheim 2, OT
Los Angeles 3, Anaheim 1
Thursday: at Los Angeles
Saturday: at Los Angeles
x-Monday: at Anaheim
x-Wednesday: at Los Angeles
x-Friday, May 16: at Anaheim

Wednesday

Penguins 4, Rangers 2

Pittsburgh 4, N.Y. Rangers 2
First Period—1, Pittsburgh, Malkin 5 (Crosby), 2:31.

Second Period—2, N.Y. Rangers, Hagelin 3 (McDonagh), 5:30. 3, Pittsburgh, Suter 4 (Gibbons, Letang), 18:27 (sh).
Third Period—1, Pittsburgh, Jokinen 6 (Neal), 7:02. 5, N.Y. Rangers, Zuccarello 3 (Stralman, Staal), 13:07. 6, Pittsburgh, Kunitz 3 (Malkin, Crosby), 14:04.

Shots on goal—Pittsburgh 7-11-9—27. N.Y. Rangers 6-2-4—15.
Power-play opportunities—Pittsburgh 0 of 3; Rangers 0 of 3.
Penalties—Pittsburgh, Fleury 7-3-0 (15 shots-13 saves). N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist 5 (27-23).

A—18,000 (18,006). T—2:25.

Playoff leaders

Scoring

Through May 7

| | G | A | PTS |
|--------------------------|----|----|-----|
| Anze Kopitar, LA | 9 | 10 | 14 |
| Pac Zach Parise, Min | 10 | 9 | 13 |
| Evgeni Malkin, Pitt | 10 | 7 | 12 |
| R.K. Subban, Mon | 7 | 3 | 11 |
| Pac Patrick Marleau, San | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Nathan MacKinnon, Col | 7 | 2 | 10 |
| N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist | 6 | 2 | 9 |
| Jussi Jokinen, Pitt | 10 | 6 | 9 |
| Jonathan Toews, Chi | 9 | 4 | 9 |
| Patrice Bergeron, Bos | 8 | 6 | 9 |
| Brent Seabrook, Chi | 6 | 2 | 9 |
| Sidney Crosby, Pitt | 10 | 6 | 8 |
| Patrick Kane, Chi | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| Bryan Bickell, Chi | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| Chris Kunitz, Pitt | 10 | 3 | 8 |
| Lars Eller, Mtl | 7 | 3 | 8 |
| Matt Nielsen, Pitt | 10 | 6 | 8 |
| Marian Hossa, Chi | 9 | 2 | 8 |
| Torey Krug, Bos | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| Brew Doughty, LA | 9 | 1 | 7 |
| Jason Pominville, Min | 10 | 1 | 7 |
| Paul Martin, Pitt | 10 | 1 | 7 |
| Mikael Granlund, Min | 10 | 4 | 7 |
| Milan Lucic, Bos | 8 | 4 | 7 |
| Justin Williams, LA | 9 | 3 | 7 |
| Brad Richards, NYR | 11 | 3 | 4 |
| Jack Johnson, Cfl | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| Patrick Marleau, SJ | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| Duncan Keith, Chi | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| Corey Perry, Ana | 8 | 2 | 5 |
| Brandon Saad, Chi | 9 | 2 | 5 |

Goaltending

| | GP | SV | GAA |
|-------------------------|----|-----|--------|
| Tuukka Rask, Bos | 8 | 238 | 16.187 |
| Torey Crawford, Chi | 9 | 283 | 20.195 |
| Darcy Kuemper, Min | 5 | 127 | 11.203 |
| Marc-Andre Fleury, Pitt | 10 | 295 | 23.220 |
| Henrik Lundqvist, NYR | 11 | 284 | 22.227 |
| Carey Price, Mtl | 7 | 217 | 19.247 |
| Jonathan Quick, LA | 9 | 215 | 24.268 |
| Ryan Miller, Stl | 6 | 185 | 19.270 |
| Semyon Varlamov, Col | 7 | 231 | 20.278 |
| Sergei Bobrovsky, Cfl | 6 | 218 | 20.317 |
| Kari Lehtonen, Dal | 6 | 165 | 19.329 |
| Fredrik Andersson, Ana | 6 | 166 | 18.340 |
| Antti Niemi, SJ | 6 | 164 | 19.374 |

Calendar
May 25-31 — NHL combine, Toronto.
June 18 — Last possible day for Stanley Cup finals.
June 25 — NHL awards, Las Vegas.
July 7-28 — NHL draft, Philadelphia.

July 1 — Free agency begins.
July 2 — Deadline for player-elected salary arbitration notification.
July 3 — Deadline for club-elected salary arbitration notification.

July 20-Aug. 6 — Salary arbitration hearings.
Aug. 8 — Deadline for salary arbitration decisions.

Pens push Rangers to the brink

Pittsburgh shuts down New York again, takes 3-1 lead in Eastern semifinals

By IRA PODELL

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Pittsburgh Penguins have had so much success at Madison Square Garden, they might not have to make a return trip to Broadway this year.

Brandon Sutter scored a short-handed goal to break a second-period tie, and the Penguins rode that momentum to move within a win of the Eastern Conference finals with a 4-2 victory over the New York Rangers on Wednesday.

Pittsburgh, which has won three straight following a series-opening loss, can advance with a Game 5 victory at home Friday night. The Penguins are looking to reach the East finals for the second straight year and the fourth in seven seasons.

"We know they are going to be desperate," Penguins captain Sidney Crosby said. "They have a lot of depth, and a lot of guys that can create things, so we have to have the same mentality that we had."

The Penguins turned a tied series into a 3-1 lead at the Garden, where they have won seven of nine and are 12-4 since Dan Bylesma became their coach. Overall, Pittsburgh is 19-5 against the Rangers in the playoffs and 9-2 in New York.

"This is one of the best places to come in and play," Bylesma said. "It's a great building and we seem to always have a rivalry with the Rangers, so we don't need that motivation for the playoffs. I don't have a good recipe for you."

A good start certainly helped. Evgeni Malkin scored 2:31 in,



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Pittsburgh Penguins Evgeni Malkin, left, and Chris Kunitz celebrate Malkin's first-period goal during the first period of Game 4 on Wednesday in New York. The Penguins won 4-2 and lead the series 3-1.

and Jussi Jokinen made it 3-1 at 7:02 of the third before the teams traded late goals. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 13 shots.

The only negative for the Penguins was that Fleury allowed a goal for the first time in three games. Carl Hagelin's tying tally in the second period was the Rangers' first goal in 145 minutes,

30 seconds of playing time.

Mats Zuccarello cut it to 3-2 with 6:53 left on the Rangers' second shot of the third, but Chris Kunitz restored Pittsburgh's two-goal edge 57 seconds later.

Henrik Lundqvist made 23 saves in the loss.

"This is not the ideal night for us," Rangers forward Brad Rich-

ards said. "The good thing is ... we're still in it. We win Game 1, we are on top of the world. You lose three in a row, and as quick as it went that way it can go right back."

"We want to try to bring it back here. Our goal is to keep pushing the series along. You never know what can happen."

Lavolette likes situation with Predators

By STEVE MEGAREE

The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — New Nashville Predators coach Peter Lavolette already has brought the Stanley Cup to the South before and is eager to try to do it again.



Lavolette, who coached the Carolina Hurricanes to the 2006 title and was announced Tuesday as the second coach in Predators franchise history, spoke to reporters Wednesday on a conference call from Minsk, Belarus. He currently is coaching the United States team in the World Championships.

"They've got some terrific players in place, they've got young and promising players in place," Lavolette said. "They're a team that just missed making the playoffs this past year. I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to try and get them back and compete for the Stanley Cup."

Lavolette previously coached the New York Islanders (2001-03)



MATT ROUHE/AP

Peter Lavolette will take over as the Nashville Predators' second coach in franchise history once he finishes coaching the United States team at the 2014 World Championship in Belarus.

as well as Carolina (2003-09) and Philadelphia (2009-14). The Flyers fired him last October after the team started the season 0-3.

He brings championship experience to a franchise seeking to return to the playoffs after a two-year absence. Not only did he

win a Stanley Cup with Carolina, Lavolette also reached the finals with Philadelphia in 2010. Nashville never has advanced beyond the second round of the playoffs.

His Carolina background shows he can succeed in a smaller market without a big hockey heritage.

Lavolette cited his Carolina experience as an example of how much a championship season can mean when an entire organization and community are pulling together behind a common goal.

"When you're able to build something special — and we had that opportunity in Carolina — it's so meaningful," Lavolette said. "It really is."

Lavolette's arrival marks a new era for a franchise that had been coached by Barry Trotz for its first 15 seasons. Trotz was fired last month. Lavolette called Trotz one of the top coaches in the league Wednesday and said "I know that I've got my work cut out for me because he's a terrific coach."

Under Trotz, the Predators earned a reputation for gritty play and strong defense while struggling to score goals, averaging just 2.6 goals a game this season. Their strength remains on defense, with goaltender Pekka Rinne and Norris Trophy finalist Shea Weber.

Lavolette's background suggests he can improve the Predators' offense. No team that he's coached for a full season has ever ranked below 13th in goals.

MLB



CHRISTINE COTTER, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/MCT

The Yankees' Derek Jeter hits a home run in the second inning against the Angels on Wednesday. It ended a homer drought of 161 at-bats in his final regular-season game against the Angels.

AL roundup

Jeter ends home run drought

The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Derek Jeter gave the Los Angeles Angels' fans something special to remember him by in his final game at the "Big A." And he received something equally special in return.

Jeter ended a home run drought of 161 at-bats in his final regular-season game against the Angels, and the New York Yankees kept Hector Santiago winless in seven starts with a 9-2 victory on Wednesday night.

Vidal Nuno (1-0) allowed a run and four hits in 6 1/3 innings, struck out three and retired 14 of his last 15 batters. The left-hander's only other victory in seven big league starts was May 13 of last season, when he pitched five scoreless innings of three-hit ball at Cleveland in a 7-0 decision.

Unless both clubs meet in the playoffs, this was Jeter's swan song against the Halos, who dropped two of three in the Bronx 1 1/2 weeks ago. Jered Weaver, Albert Pujols, Mike Trout and Howie Kendrick carried a 12-foot-long pinstriped paddleboard with Jeter's No. 2 and the Yankee logo to the middle of the diamond and presented it to him following a milestone-studded video tribute as the sellout crowd of 44,083 roared its approval.

"That was a cool gift. I thought that was awesome. I can use that in my backyard," Jeter said with a grin. "But I don't expect something everywhere I go. I mean, this was a surprise to me. The fans have been awesome here from the first game of the series. It's something that you'll remember, and I appreciate it. I've

played a lot of games here in the regular season and postseason, so I have fond memories of playing in Anaheim."

It was the second time in two years that the Angels' management went out of the way to honor a member of former manager Joe Torre's "Core Four." Last season it was Mariano Rivera, who retired as the all-time saves leader and received a painting of himself.

Jeter made it 6-0 in the second with a two-out drive to left-center for his 257th career homer and first since July 28, 2013, against Tampa Bay's Matt Moore at New York. In Monday's series opener, the Yankees' captain doubled to end a drought of 55 at-bats without an extra-base hit.

"It's good to get one," Jeter said. "I'm not catching Babe Ruth or anything, but at least you'd like to get one. The important thing is that we got a win. It was a good game for us in a lot of different ways."

Tigers 3, Astros 2: Miguel Cabrera hit a two-run homer and host Detroit won its eighth straight game. The Astros lost their fifth in a row.

Cabrera connected in the first inning. A day earlier, he homered in a four-hit, four-RBI performance. Victor Martinez homered, extending his hitting streak to 10 games for the three-time defending AL Central champions.

Orioles 4, Rays 3: Adam Jones hit a pair of solo homers and Jonathan Schoop launched a tiebreaking, two-run shot that sent visiting Baltimore over Tampa Bay. Schoop's drive in the seventh

inning off Brandon Gomes (2-2) put the Orioles ahead 4-2.

Jones hit leadoff homers in both the second and fourth off Cesar Ramos. It was his fourth multihomer game.

Indians 4, Twins 3: Mike Aviles' two-out single in the ninth inning lifted host Cleveland.

Asdrubal Cabrera led off the inning with a double against Casey Fien (3-1).

After Lonnie Chisenhall's sacrifice bunt, Yan Gomes grounded out. Aviles hit a hard grounder into center field for Cleveland's first walk-off win of the season — the Indians had 11 walk-offs since last season.

Blue Jays 10, Phillies 0: Mark Buehrle became the first six-game winner in the majors, Edwin Encarnacion hit a three-run homer and host Toronto beat Philadelphia for the seventh straight time.

Erik Kratz and Juan Francisco both hit two-run homers for the Blue Jays, who blew open a pitcher's duel between Buehrle and Cliff Lee (3-3) with a nine-run, 12-batter seventh inning.

Mariners 6, Athletics 4: Athletics 2, Mariners 0: Fill-in starter Drew Pomeranz pitched five scoreless innings for his second win in his past 20 starts and host Oakland salvaged a split of a doubleheader by beating Seattle.

In the opener, the Mariners overcame a shaky start from ace Felix Hernandez to win on Justin Smoak's two-out single in the 10th inning.

Yoenis Cespedes homered as the A's snap a six-game home losing streak.

Interleague roundup

Arenado's streak ties Rockies mark

The Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — With one swing in the first inning, Nolan Arenado quickly took the drama out of whether he would match Colorado's record hitting streak and set the Rockies up for another rout over Texas.

Arenado's two-run double in the first extended his hitting streak to 27 games, matching teammate Michael Cuddyer's record streak from last year. It also put Colorado ahead to stay on way to its third lopsided victory over the Rangers in as many nights, 9-2 on Wednesday.

"Nolan is one of those guys that's really locked in right now, and it was good to see him get that hit in the first at-bat," manager Walt Weiss said. "I think that kind of set the tone."

That was the first of three hits for Arenado, who is hitting .364 (39-for-107) in the streak that started a month ago Friday. His streak is the longest for anyone 23 years or younger since Albert Pujols had a 30-game in 2003 when he was 23.

"It's pretty cool, pretty cool," Arenado said. "I'm trying to stay within myself. I'm not trying to get too big, or trying to hit the home run. I'm just trying to hit the ball hard. I'm going to keep on saying that until the year is over."

Carlos Gonzalez homered for Colorado, which has outscored Texas 29-5 in three games this week. The Rockies won 8-2 and 12-1 at home with a combined 34 hits before the teams shifted to Texas for two games.

"We've got to ride this wave while it's going good," said Weiss, whose team's 22 wins are tied for the most in the majors.

Every starter had a hit for the Rockies, who finished with 16 and got 12 of them in 3 1/3 innings off

Colby Lewis (2-2).

Jorge De La Rosa (4-3) struck out four and walked three. The lefty gave up two runs over six innings while winning its fourth consecutive start.

Adrian Beltre homered for Texas and became only the fifth player in major league history with 100 home runs for three different teams.

White Sox 8, Cubs 3: Gordon Beckham homered for the second straight night and Paul Konerko had a big three-run double, leading the host White Sox over the sliding Cubs.

Jose Abreu collected three more hits as the White Sox roughed up Travis Wood on their way to their fourth straight win, extending their season-best streak. The rookie slugger doubled twice to run his major league-best total to 24 extra-base hits.

Red Sox 4, Reds 3: Will Middlebrooks hit an RBI single with the bases loaded, capping a 20-run rally in the eighth inning that sent host Boston over Cincinnati for a sweep of the two-game series.

David Ortiz and Mike Napoli also drove in runs for the World Series champion Red Sox, who reached .500 for the first time since the fourth game of the season.

Royals 8, Padres 0: James Shields scattered seven hits over seven innings, Eric Hosmer drove in a season-high four runs and visiting Kansas City beat San Diego.

The Royals scored three times in the first and that was plenty for Shields (4-3). He struck out four, walked two and threw 118 pitches.

The Padres were shut out for a major league-high sixth time this season.



TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

The Rockies' Nolan Arenado watches the flight of his two-run double off a pitch from the Rangers' Colby Lewis in the first inning Wednesday. The hit extended Arenado's hitting streak to 27 games.

MLB/SPORTS BRIEFS



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVIA/AP

Nationals starting pitcher Stephen Strasburg pitched into the eighth inning for the first time this season Wednesday, earning a 3-2 win against the Dodgers in Washington.

NL roundup

Strasburg carries Nats into 8th inning

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — By the time Stephen Strasburg reached back and threw a 96 mph fastball for a strikeout to end the top of the seventh with his 106th pitch, his usual first-inning struggles seemed long ago — and his day seemed over.

When the next inning rolled around Wednesday, though, Nationals manager Matt Williams sent Strasburg to the mound to face the top of the Dodgers' order in what would become a 3-2 victory for Washington, the first time this season the No. 1 overall pick in the 2009 amateur draft pitched into the eighth.

"He's our horse," Williams said, indicating he'd like to keep his ace in deep into games more often.

"We don't want to do that every time," Williams added. "But in a game like today, he's got the lead and [you] want to show confidence in him that we're willing to send him back out there to protect that lead."

Said Strasburg, who improved to 3-2 with a 3.42 ERA: "That's the position I want to be in."

After waiting through a rain delay of more than 1½ hours to throw his first pitch, the righty did what he's done all season: labored to get the first three outs, then been fairly dominant. This time, he gave up four consecutive singles, including run-scoring hits by Adrian Gonzalez and Yasel Puig, during a 28-pitch first as Los Angeles went ahead 2-0.

"I've been trying not to go out there and give up a crooked number early," Strasburg said. "But you can give up one or two early and just keep it close and try your guys a chance to get back into the ballgame or get the lead."

He's allowed eight earned runs in his eight first innings in 2014, a 9.00 ERA.

From the second inning on, it's 2.29.

"He's as good as anybody on any given day. We've also seen that anybody can get beat on any given day," Williams said. "We want to get him to that point where he can finish that eighth inning, too. That's important for him."

In all, Strasburg allowed two runs and seven hits — all singles — in 7 1/3 innings. He faced the minimum three batters in each of the second through fifth innings, and threw a total of 114 pitches.

Cardinals 7, Braves 1: Adam Wainwright pitched eight strong innings, Matt Holliday drove in three runs and Peter Bourjos homered to lead visiting St. Louis.

Wainwright (6-2) helped himself, leading off the third with a double and coming around to score. Holliday broke it open with a two-out, two-run single in the fourth.

Marlins 1, Mets 0: Marcell Ozuna hit a sacrifice fly with one out in the ninth inning as host Miami completed a three-game sweep of the New York Mets.

Miami's Tom Koehler gave up two hits in eight innings. Steve Cishek (3-1) pitched a perfect ninth.

Pirates 4, Giants 3: Gerrit Cole won for the first time in nearly a month for host Pittsburgh.

Cole (3-2) outpitched Tim Lincecum (2-2) for the second time in his 11-month major league career, allowing three runs and seven hits in eight innings with seven strikeouts and a walk.

Diamondbacks 3, Brewers 2: Paul Goldschmidt hit a two-run homer for the second straight game to back Bronson Arroyo and lead the Arizona Diamondbacks over the Milwaukee Brewers.

Goldschmidt hit his seventh homer after Martin Prado led off the third with a single. Goldschmidt went 7-for-15 in a three-game series.

Arizona took two of three from the team that began the day an NL-best 22-12.

Briefly

Sterling's wife looking to head onto Clippers

From wire reports

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles Clippers co-owner Shelly Sterling said Wednesday that she believes she is legally entitled to maintain ownership of the NBA team and will attempt to do so, even as the pro basketball league pushes to remove her husband from the team he has owned for 33 years.

Sterling described her long tenure as a "die-hard" fan of the Clippers and said she believes that the sanctions against Donald Sterling — which included a lifetime ban and \$2.5 million fine — do not apply to "me or my family."

Shelly Sterling's position presents a "wild card" for the pro basketball league as it faces its biggest crisis in memory, said a league official, who declined to be identified because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter. Her intention to hold on to the team is a wrinkle apparently not contemplated by NBA officials when they moved nine days ago to strip her estranged husband of ownership.

Players, fans and other owners have signaled that they would like to see a fresh start for the Los Angeles franchise, which is in the midst of a playoff run in what could be its most successful season after decades of mediocrity. Ownership by any of the Sterlings could mean a continued flight of sponsors and a potential boycott from players and fans.

The NBA had no immediate response to Shelly Sterling's desire to keep the team. On Wednesday, in the comments provided to the Los Angeles Times by her representatives, she said she had retained a law firm to guide her in her ownership quest.

The league moved against Donald Sterling after the website TMZ released a recording in which Sterling told a frequent court-side companion that he did not want to see her at Clippers games with black people. Faced with an exodus of advertisers and player anger, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver responded with the fine, lifetime ban and call for the league's 29 other owners to vote to force Sterling to sell the team.

When Silver announced Donald Sterling's punishment, he said there had been "no decisions about other members of the Sterling family," adding: "This ruling applies specifically to Donald Sterling and Donald Sterling's conduct only."

But Silver also said that when it comes to a vote on future ownership, fellow NBA board members would consider Sterling's "overall fitness to be an owner in the NBA," which would take into account a lifetime of behavior.

The NBA had no immediate re-

sponse to Shelly Sterling's desire to keep the team. On Wednesday, in the comments provided to the Los Angeles Times by her representatives, she said she had retained a law firm to guide her in her ownership quest.

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Yankees to retire Torre's No. 6

NEW YORK — The Yankees will retire former Joe Torre's No. 6, leaving Derek Jeter's No. 2 as the last single digit in New York's pinstripes.

Torre, Rich Gossage, Tino Martinez and Paul O'Neill also will be honored with plaques in Monument Park, the team said Thursday.

Torre managed the Yankees to World Series titles in 1996 and from 1998-00 and six AL pennants during 12 seasons as manager that ended in 2007. Currently Major League Baseball's executive vice president for baseball operations, he is being inducted into baseball's Hall of Fame this summer.

Torre's number will be retired during a ceremony in Monument Park on Aug. 23. His number will join those of Billy Martin (1), Babe Ruth (3), Lou Gehrig (4), Joe DiMaggio (5), Mickey Mantle (7), Yogi Berra and Bill Dickey (8), Roger Maris (9), Phil Rizzuto (10), Thomas Munson (15), Whitey Ford (16), Don Mattingly (23), Elston Howard (32), Casey Stengel (37), Mariano Rivera (42), Reggie Jackson (44) and Ron Guidry (49).

Jeter, the Yankees' captain since 2003, said in February this will be his final season.

Agassi says Nadal greatest player ever

SINGAPORE — Andre Agassi says Rafael Nadal should be considered the greatest tennis player ever, not Roger Federer.

Agassi made the comments in an interview with Singapore newspaper Straits Times, saying

Nadal's achievements are more impressive because he has had to deal with tougher opponents.

Federer has 17 Grand Slam titles to Nadal's 13, although the Spaniard leads his Swiss rival 23-10 in head-to-head meettings.

Agassi is quoted as saying that "I'd put Nadal No. 1, Federer No. 2," adding that "it's just remarkable to me what he has done, and he has done it all during Federer's prime."

The former No. 1 says "Nadal had to deal with Federer, (Novak) Djokovic, (Andy) Murray in the golden age of tennis. He has done what he has done and he's not done yet."

Three Oregon hoops players investigated

The University of Oregon isn't allowing three basketball players to participate in team activities after a student told police they sexually assaulted her at a postgame party and later at an apartment.

Police in Eugene investigated the allegations against Danyean Dotson, 19, Dominic Artie, 19, and Brandon Austin, 18. Lane County District Attorney Alex Gardner decided there was not enough evidence to prove the sex wasn't consensual.

Assistant athletic director Andy McNamara said the three players are not currently participating in any team activities.

The university has refused to say why the players have been disciplined.

The police report released by the Eugene Police Department states that the players say the sex was consensual. Austin's attorney, Laura Fine Moro, did not return calls seeking comment. No phone listings could be found for Dotson or Artie in Eugene. It was not known whether Dotson or Artie had attorneys.

Citing federal privacy laws, university spokesman Tobin Klinger would not say whether an internal university investigation had been initiated, or whether the basketball players were barred from team activities because of the allegations. He did say that the woman's father reported her allegations to the university on March 9, the day after the party where she met the players. The party was the same night the Ducks beat No. 3 Arizona in the final game of the regular season, and before they went on to the Pac-12 and NCAA tournaments.

For Austin, it's the second sexual assault allegation he has faced. While at Providence College, he and another Providence player were accused last year of sexually assaulting a female student on campus.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Scoreboard

Second round

(Best-of-7, x-if necessary)

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Series 1: Miami 107, Brooklyn 94
Sunday at Brooklyn
Saturday at Brooklyn
x-Wednesday at Miami
x-Friday, May 16 at Brooklyn
x-Sunday, May 18 at Miami
Washington 102, Indiana 96
Wednesday Indiana 86, Washington 82

Friday at Washington
Sunday at Washington
Tuesday at Indiana
x-Thursday at Washington
x-Sunday, May 18 at Indiana

WESTERN CONFERENCE

San Antonio 116, Portland 92
Thursday at San Antonio
Saturday at Portland
x-Wednesday at San Antonio
x-Friday, May 16 at Portland
x-Monday, May 19 at San Antonio
L.A. Clippers 1, Oklahoma City 1
L.A. Clippers 122, Oklahoma City 105
Wednesday Oklahoma City 112, L.A. Clippers 101
Friday at L.A. Clippers
Sunday at L.A. Clippers
Tuesday at Oklahoma City
x-Thursday, May 15 at L.A. Clippers
x-Sunday, May 18 at Oklahoma City

Wednesday

Thunder 112, Clippers 101

L.A. CLIPPERS—Barnes 4-8 0-0 11, Griffin 5-13 5-6 15, Jordan 3-4 1-2 7, Paul 6-13 3-17, Redick 2-10 2-18, D.Collison 4-8 5-6 13, Crawford 2-13 2-7 7, Granger 0-1 0-0 0, Davis 5-7 0-0 10, Dudley 0-4 0-0 0, Green 1-2 0-3. Totals 37-83 18-33 101.

OKLAHOMA CITY—Henderson 10-22 9-11 32, Ibaka 6-10 2-4 14, Perkins 3-7 2-8 8, Westbrook 13-22 3-5 31, Sefolosha 6-9 0-0 14, Jackson 2-5 0-0 4, Butler 1-5 0-0 3, Adams 3-4 0-6, N.Collison 0-1 0-0 0, Fisher 0-2 0-0 0, Lema 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 44-87 16-22 112.

L.A. Clippers 28 28 21 24—101
Oklahoma City 37 24 33 18—112
Three-Point Goals—L.A. Clippers 9-27 (Barnes 3-7, Redick 2-4, Paul 2-5, Green 1-2, Crawford 1-7, Granger 0-1), Oklahoma City 8-23 (Durant 3-9, Westbrook 2-4, Sefolosha 2-5, Butler 1-3, Fisher 0-2). **Free Throws**—L.A. Clippers 41 (Jordan 8, Adams 4, Sefolosha 4, Butler 3, Granger 3), Oklahoma City 21 (Technical—Crawford, Paul, L.A. Clippers defensive three second, Westbrook, Coach Brooks, Westbrook, Adams, C—18-203 (18,203).

Pacers 86, Wizards 82

WASHINGTON—Ariza 2-8 0-0 6, Nene 7-14 0-4 14, Gortat 10-15 1-2 21, Wall 2-13 2-2 6, Beal 7-15 1-7, Gordon 2-4 1-2 5, Webster 2-4 0-0 5, Booker 1-0 0-2, Miller 3-6 0-0 6, Thomas 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 36-69 12-82.

INDIANA—George 5-13 1-2 11, West 3-8 3-4 9, Hibbert 10-15 8-8 28, G.Hill 6-12 1-2 14, Stephenson 3-12 0-2, Mahan 3-4 0-6, Turner 0-0 0-0 0, Watson 2-5 0-0 5, Scola 0-4 1-2 8, Toney 1-0 0-0 0. Totals 32-72 18-82 86.

Washington 23 22 19 18—82
Indiana 20 25 18—86
Three-Point Goals—Washington 5-21 (Beal 2-6, Ariza 2-7, Webster 1-2, Miller 0-1, Wall 0-4), Indiana 4-12 (Stephenson 2-4, Watson 1-2, Hill 1-1, Mahan 0-2, George 0-3). **Fouled Out**—None, Robinson—Washington 5 (Gortat 11), Indiana 4 (Hibbert 3, Ariza 1, Stephenson 2, Wall 5), Indiana 17 (Stephenson 5), Total Fouls—Washington 21, Indiana 15. A—18,165 (18,165).

Hibbert, Pacers hold off Wizards to tie series

By MICHAEL MAROT

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Big Roy came up with a big answer for his critics and his teammates Wednesday. He played like an All-Star when the Pacers really needed it.

After 48 hours of questions and criticism, Roy Hibbert scored a season-high 28 points, grabbed nine rebounds, blocked two shots and altered a handful of others in the Eastern Conference semifinals with an 86-82 victory over Washington.

Hibbert sounded more relieved than redeemed.

"David West always talks to me about being the person that rescues yourself when you're in

the middle of the ocean," Hibbert said after Indiana tied the best-of-seven series at 1-1. "There's nobody who can throw a lifesaver or a rope out to help you. So I had to do it myself."

The next step is proving he can play this way again Friday when Washington hosts Game 3.

Hibbert went into Wednesday with a combined total of 37 points and 24 rebounds in Indiana's first eight playoff games. Twice in the previous four he failed to score a point or grab a rebound.

Beleaguered Pacers fans wanted Hibbert benched. Frustrated teammates talked publicly and privately about needing more from their 7-foot-2 center. Critics turned Hibbert into the butt of jokes and on the Internet, some

even tried to explain Hibbert's incredible disappearing act with unseemly speculation.

After talking to his old college coach, John Thompson III, and Colts linebacker Robert Mathis, a close friend, Hibbert blocked out the inescapable firestorm, focused on basketball and fueled a 6-0 run late in the fourth quarter.

George Hill finished with 14 points, Paul George had 11 points, six rebounds and four assists, and Lance Stephenson added 12 points, seven rebounds and five assists. And for the first time this postseason, the Pacers held an opponent to fewer than nine three-pointers. Washington finished 5 of 21 from behind the arc, the lowest percentage (23.8) in the playoffs this year.

Much of the credit went to Hibbert, who helped open up the offensive lanes for his teammates and protected the rim well enough and defended the perimeter.

"He's got our attention now," Drew Gooden said. "We've got to be focused on guarding the Roy Hibbert we know."

It was a lost opportunity for the Wizards, who had won their first four playoff games on the road — three at Chicago and Monday night at Indy — and could have gone home with a 2-0 lead.

Washington led by as much as six early in the third quarter and rallied in the fourth to take a 77-74 lead with 5:01 to go before Hibbert and George scored six straight to give the Pacers the lead for good.

Durant delivers MVP performance

Forward hits 32, just misses triple-double as Thunder draw even with Clippers

By CLIFF BRUNT

The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Kevin Durant stood before his adoring home crowd, proudly holding his MVP trophy above his head during a pregame ceremony.

He spent the next few hours showing how he earned it.

Durant had 32 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Los Angeles Clippers 112-101 on Wednesday night to tie their Western Conference semifinal series at one game apiece.

"We wanted to come back and respond," Durant said. "So, I think that's what fueled the team tonight. We just went out there and played extremely well and left it all out there, and came out with a good 'W.'"

During his emotional MVP acceptance speech on Tuesday, Durant called teammate Russell Westbrook an MVP-caliber player. Westbrook backed up Durant's words with 31 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for his third triple-double in his past five playoff games.

"I think Russ played harder than all of us combined," Clippers guard Chris Paul said. "He was all over the place."

Thunder coach Scott Brooks took Durant out of the game with 1:21 remaining, costing him a shot at the triple-double. According to information provided to the Thunder by the Elias Sports Bureau, no pair of teammates has had triple-doubles in the same playoff game.

Serge Ibaka and Thabo Sefolosha each scored 14 points for the Thunder, who shot 51 percent from the field and outrebounded the Clippers 52-36.

"It was the perfect storm," Clippers guard Jamal Crawford said. "They did everything they could to win, and they got everything they wanted tonight. That wasn't the Clippers team we've been and I'm sure we'll get back on track."



Sue Ogrocki/AP

Thunder forward Kevin Durant (35) shoots over Los Angeles Clippers forward Matt Barnes in the fourth quarter of Game 2 of their Western Conference semifinal series in Oklahoma City on Wednesday. The Thunder won 112-101 to tie the best-of-7 series 1-1.

J.J. Redick scored 18 points, Paul had 17 points and 11 assists, and Blake Griffin added 15 points for the Clippers. Los Angeles made 15 of 29 three-pointers in Game 1, but just 9 of 27 in Game 2.

The Clippers will host Game 3 Friday in Los Angeles.

Durant scored 17 points in the first quarter to help the Thunder take a 37-28 lead. Paul, who scored 17 points in the first quarter of Game 1, went scoreless in the same period of Game 2 and watched most of the period from the bench with two fouls as the Thunder took control early.

Oklahoma City got an offensive boost from an unlikely source in the third quarter — Sefolosha, a

defensive stopper. He hit a mid-range jumper, then dunked after a steal by Westbrook to give the Thunder a 78-66 lead. Sefolosha dunked again, then got a steal that led to a three-pointer by Westbrook and gave Oklahoma City a 90-73 advantage.

Sefolosha, who had averaged just 3.7 points in the playoffs, scored 12 points in the quarter to help the Thunder take a 94-77 lead into the fourth. Clippers coach Doc Rivers said he expected Durant and Westbrook to score, but not Sefolosha.

"We can win if they (Durant and Westbrook) both have good offensive games," Rivers said. "What we can't do is then give them that

plus everything else. And I thought that's what happened tonight."

Westbrook clinched his triple-double with 1:21 remaining when he was credited with an assist after a pass to Sefolosha, who took two dribbles on his drive to the basket.

Rivers said the Thunder were the aggressors.

"Every single possession, you have to have great focus and you have to be locked in, and today we were not," he said. "I thought it was because of all the clutter today. We're upset at the officials, we're upset at everything instead of turning our anger on the opponent and focus. Tonight we just didn't have it."



DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

Indiana's Roy Hibbert (55) puts up a shot in front of Washington's John Wall (2) during Game 2 of their Eastern Conference semifinal series on Wednesday in Indianapolis. The Pacers won 86-82.

SPORTS



On thin ice

Rangers facing elimination after Game 4 loss to Penguins | Page 27

NFL DRAFT

Role call

Small-school stars ready for big-stage spotlight

By MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS—Zach Moore and Larry Webster found unconventional ways to reach NFL draft weekend.

When Moore's subpar high school grades scared away big-time football schools from offering scholarships, the Chicago native enrolled at tiny Concordia University in Minnesota. Webster, the son of a former NFL player, spent three years starting on Bloomsburg's college basketball team before giving football a second shot in 2012.

League scouts still found them and next week, these two Division II stars could hear their names called out on the biggest stage of all, Radio City Music Hall.

"Not many of these people thought I would get this far," Moore said. "The knock always is the level of competition. They're always going to grill you for not facing Division I talent, but as they watch in film, they know I can play."

The scouts have increasingly found talent at smaller schools, making sure they don't miss out on the next big thing in football, even if it comes far from the spotlight.

Examples can be found everywhere.

Football Championship Subdivision alums Kurt Warner and Joe Flacco both earned Super Bowl rings after becoming starting quarterbacks, although Warner had to play in Arena Football and NFL Europe first.

Robert Mathis, who also played in the FCS, is the NFL's reigning sacks champ. Offensive lineman Jahri Evans has been to five Pro Bowls despite coming out of Bloomsburg. And three of the greatest players in NFL history — Brett Favre, the late Walter Payton and Jerry Rice — all played college ball in Mississippi, though none of the three played at an SEC school and only Favre played in the top level of college ball.

SEE SMALL ON PAGE 26

Professional scouts are increasingly finding talent at smaller Division II schools, giving hope to lesser-known but nonetheless talented players such as Bloomsburg defensive end Larry Webster (99) and Concordia defensive back Zach Moore (90) that they could be among those hearing their names called at the NFL draft.

AP PHOTOS

Inside:

■ Openly-gay pass-rusher Sam looking for a fair shot, Page 26

Westbrook nets triple-double, Durant one assist shy as OKC tops Clippers | Page 31

Arenado extends hitting streak to 27 as Colorado routs Texas | Page 29

